

Herod's cruelty Mat. 2. v. 16.



Herod was exceeding wroth and sent forth and slew
all the Children that were in Beth

Herods cruelty Mat. 2. v. 16.



Herod was exceeding wroth and slew
all the Children that were in Beth

THE 38.6.
SLAUGHTER
OF THE 25
Innocents
BY
HEROD.

Written in Italian.

By the famous Poet the
Cavalier *Marino*. (9.13.)

In Four BOOKS.

Newly Englished.

LONDON,

Printed by *Andrew Clark*, for *Samuel Mearne*
Stationer to the King's Most Excellent
Majesty. 1675.



3 Feb

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To Her Royal Highness

M A R Y

Dutcheſs of Y O R K.

May it pleaſe Your Royal Highneſs,



*His Preſent which I moſt humbly
lay at Your Royal Highneſſes
Feet, could not be worthy Your
Acceptance, were it not derived
from that Garden of the Muſes
Your own Country. It is a Poem
famous both for its Subject,*

*Strage de gli Innocenti) and its Author, the
Cavalier Marino, who if he appear not to Your
Royal Highneſs in ſo beautiful and glorious a Dreſs
as was Native to him, yet I hope Your Royal
Highneſs will vouchſafe to look upon him in this
Engliſh Habit, with which You are now ſo well
acquainted, that, among other felicities which the
Nation hopes from Your Royal Perſon, it is not the
leaſt ſatisfaction that we have ſo great an Argument
of Your good and gracious Inclinations for us, as to
have ſo ſoon, and ſo eaſily attained our Language,*
(*) *which*

The Epistle Dedicatory.

*which will encourage the most Ingenious to embellish
it for Your sake, with all the Ornaments they can
borrow from Your Italian, thereby the better to
express their Devotion to Your Service, and more
easily obtain pardon for what comes short of Your
Royal Highnesses Merits, which is the most humble
Petition of,*

May it please Your Royal Highness,

Your most faithful, and most

Obedient Servant

T. R.

THE
SLAUGHTER
OF THE
INNOCENTS.

BOOK I.

Herod his Jealousie.

I.

NO more of Love my Muse; we'll sing the dire
Rage of a King, who thousand Infants slue,
Torn from their Mothers breasts. (O curs'd desire
Of Rule! What will not blind Ambition do?)
You Christ's Vanquerours, my weak thoughts inspire!
You faithful Witnesses assist Me! You!
Whose tender throats, enlarg'd by murdering swords,
Gave streams of Bloud, instead of Crys and Words.

II.

And thou *Antonio*, great *Iberus* Fame!
Most noble Branch of Emperours, and Kings!
Who must not yield to thy transplendant Flame?
Even *Sol's* eclipsed, as thy *Aurora* spring's.
Mirrour of Heroes, to whose valued Name
Unconquered Vertue her chief glories brings.
This flowry Wreath, although of small esteem,
Vouchsafe to accept, compos'd of Sacred Rime.

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III.

Nor blush (my Muse) devoted to adorn
With these poor Flow'rs, his so deserving Brow.
These Flow'rs, near the *Phebean* Fountain born,
Whence those Immortal Veins of water flow.
Flow'rs on the Sacred Hill preserv'd, that scorn
Or *Sirius* burning Rage, or *Soreas* Snow.

Whence their most secret sweets, th' Ingenious swarm
Extract, and their eternal Honey form.

IV.

Thou, who with such esteem, with so great Fame
The reins o'th' *Parthenopian* War dost guide,
That neither *Rome*, nor *Athens* boast a Name
More worthy in their Monuments of Pride.
So, that thy famous Actions to proclaim,
Not only my Joy'd Siren is employ'd,

But all the ecchoing streams o'th' *Tyrrbene* shore,
Thy Name, Immortal, murmur, and adore.

V.

Under the vast Abyss, near to the Heart
O'th' Universe, and Center of the World;
Within the Gulph of the profoundest part
Stood the old Spirit, which from Heav'n was hurl'd;
About whose Loyns, with horrid jaws retort,
Myriads of Aspes in filthy knots ate curl'd,
Subdu'd in Paradise, with those dire Chains,
The Angel bound him to Eternal Pains.

VI.

Here Judge of Torments, and the King of Woes,
His Throne, and Robe of Everlasting Fire,
A Robe, once rich, that did the Morn disclose,
Now interweav'd with Flames, and Night entire.

On's

The Slaughter of the Innocents. 3

On's Head (and's Scepter this sole glory knows)
A Crown, from which seven lofty Horns aspire.
About this Diadem (most dreadful Snakes;))
A Fring, the Ceraſt, and green Hydra make's.

VII.

Within his Eyes, where Death and Sorrow ly,
A troubled fiery Light of gloomy Red.
From's Squinting Aspect rayes obliquely fly,
Like Comets Stygian Lamps his Eye-brows shed.
From's noſtrils, and ſwolln Lips, of livid Dy,
Dark Miſts, and filthy Stinks, by vomit fed.
His thoughts, are rabid Rage, Pride, black Deſpaire,
Thunder his Sighs, his Breathings lightnings are.

VIII.

Looks bloody, and contagious, his Breath
Which raiſeth dreadful flames, and deadly fumes,
Kindle's that horrid Pile, that carrys Death,
And others inconfumably consumes.
With harſheſt noiſe, he champs, and grinds his Teeth,
All rough, with blackeſt ruſt, and naſty ſcums,
And entring, with his limbs of ſteel, the flames,
His Tail the clashing of his ſcailes proclaimes.

IX.

Near his infernal Throne, aſſiſtants are
Three Virgin Siſters cruel as his Mind,
Who whips of Vipers, and of Thorns prepare;
To prick Him on to Miſchief ſtill inclin'd.
About their Faces, curl'd inſtead of haire,
Making a diſmal ſhade, are Serpents twin'd,
His Scepter is of Ir'n, and while He reigns,
H'abhors his Empire, and Himſelf diſdains.

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X.

Wretch! as thou fells't from Glory, in thy Prime,
 Who didst most glorious Angels once excel,
 So the severe Revenger of thy Crime,
 Shall justly thy Injustice plague in Hell.
 Proud Lover of thy beautilous Self! to climbe
 Unto another's Throne, Thou didst rebel,
 But chang'd, and into Phlegethon now thrown,
 Oh proud *Narcissus*! Impious *Phaethon*!

XI.

And now the grand Contest, that rais'd, of old,
 So great a flame in Heav'n, he calls to mind;
 What Oracles, what dark Decrees enfold;
 What Sibylls Holy Prophets had devin'd,
 Think's what their Songs, and Writings had foretold;
 What thousand Prodigies, of late, design'd.
 He saw, and heard those things, that, in his breast,
 Reviving grief, his Jealousies encreas't.

XII.

He saw from God, sent into *Galile*
 An heav'nly Nuntio, to an humble Maid
 Whom greeting low, as to a Deitie,
 He Lillies o' th' Eternal *April* pay'd.
 Made Fruitful, in her old Sterilitie,
 Into the aged Hebrew's womb convey'd,
 He a Babe leaping saw (a Saint before
 'Twas born) his God conceiv'd, with joy, adore

XIII.

He saw th' *Atlantique*, Adamantine snow,
 Resolve to Nectar, and to Silver Rills.
 On *Scythian*, frozen Hills all Fruits to grow,
 While sudden Springs, the *Libyan* Desert fill's

The Slaughter of the Innocents.

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Hony from sweating Pines, and Oakes to flow,
While Heav'nly Manna from the wind distill's.
Thorns winter Roses, in *Engaddi's* field,
The Fountains Balsam, milk the Rivers yield.

XIV.

He saw in that most happy, holy Night,
The silent Shades, and darkest horrors all
Struck by the Voice of Heav'n, and ruin'd quit,
And, by the Angel's glory vanquish'd, fall.
Through woods, and wildest Caves, in joyful flight,
The Peasants on the neighbring Shepherds call,
And hast together, to their new-born King,
The simple Tribute of Rude gifts to bring.

XV.

The Eastern Palace open, He, from far,
Beheld, and thence a Triple Sun to rise,
Sacred to the fair Goddess, who all war
Detests, a Temple fall'n before his eyes;
Her Images, and Altars ruin'd are
Which they were wont to cloy with Sacrifice.
The Earth he see's to tremble, and divide
The Wanton Lover, from his Mistri's side.

XVI.

He saw besides, with an unusual Ray,
A Star Miraculous, in Heav'n to shine,
And towards *Bethlaem*, the directest way,
With flames, like lightning, but more bright, design.
Which as a glorious Servant, to convey,
And guide them, as a Messenger Divine,
The Royal Troop of three presaging Kings
Thither from the Odorous Orient brings.

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XVII.

To these new Monsters, as Ills yet unknowne,
This Enemy of Good, converts his eyes.
Which certain to Himself, and Death alone,
As Mortal Wounds, He did before surmise.
He stretch'd his Wings, and wou'd away ha' flowne.
(His Wings like Sailes full blown, of largest Size)
But the strong Gyves that bind Him, and enchain,
In his Eternal Prison him restrain.

XVIII.

From these Effects of things below, the high
Intent of what was done Above he knows
Then dipt in Bloud, and Poison instantly,
Dire lamps, (his Hellish brands) he overthrows
Hides with his claws his Face, then gives a Cry
That bellowing through the darkeſt Caverns goes.
And while his Rage, and Fury thus prevaile,
He bites the Top of his entorted Taile.

XIX.

Thus with himself he frets, but still in doubt
'Twixt two, and un-resolv'd he yet remains.
He Studies the grand Book and to find out,
The Sense, of Ancient Writings wracks his brains.
He knows :— Yet does not : how to bring about
The Birth o' th' Heav'nly Infant, God ordain's.
Or how a Child should pure, and spotless come,
Divinely Humane, from a Virgin's Wombe.

XX.

Hence He denyes that greatest Myſterie,
That Wonder hid from Wits the most refin'd,
As how a wife should still a Virgin be
And keep that Flow'r un-touch'd, as was her mind.

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7

It seems a strang Impossibilitie

That true God, should to true Man be resign'd.

The Spirit Incarnate be, and, in the Toiles
Of life involv'd, be cloth'd with Mortal spoiles.

XXI.

Th' Incomprehensible, Invisible Light

When born, to Shepherds should revealed be.

That God Omnipotent, and Infinit

Should be Confin'd to Swadling Bands: that He

Who fed on Heav'nly Nectar, should delight

To suck like Children in their Infancie.

That He should be in the rude Stable lay'd

Of a poor Inn, whose Throne of stars is made.

XXII.

That a small Veil should the chief Sun obscure,

The Word Divine, like Infants, stam'ring Cry.

Who made the Fire, should, trembling, Cold endure.

The Joy of Angels languish : Majesty

Of Heav'n, to Servitude Himself inure :

And He who was Immense, should Les'ned ly :

That Greatest Glory, should to griefs, and Fears

Be Subject, and Eternity to years.

XXIII.

That He himself should humble so, to pay

Exacted Tribute, and to Laws be bound,

Whom, as the great Law-giver all obey.

He from the Knife of Flint receive a wound,

And that on their Redeemer men should lay

The Sinner's Mark, in whom no Spot was found.

These Ambiguities his thoughts involve,

Nor can he this great Knot of doubts dissolve.

Mean

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XXIV.

Mean time, his busy thoughts new plots design'd
His black Hearts Image, his stern Face doth bear
For looks in that dark Empire shew the Mind,
And the Impress of inward Sadness weare.
As we Heav'n's Chearfulness by Light do find,
And Mirth on Earth by Laughter doe's appeare.

Stung with these cares (like Thunder) from his breast
A Desperate Oh-me ! his grief express't.

XXV.

Oh me ! He bellowing cry's, what mean's this high
Concourse of strange Portents I now behold ?
What can it be ?---ah, to my Sorrow, I
Remember what the Angel said, of old.

Oh-could I Nature's Seat ore'turne ! that by
My hand the Course of Stars could be controul'd !

Since these so direful Omens from Above
Through Me must joyful, and most happy prove.

XXVI.

What can He more, who chas'd Me, long ago,
From my bright Palace, and Celestial Seat.
It might suffice, that I'me for ever, so
Confin'd to th' horrors of this sad Retreat,
Condemn'd to shades of Misery and Wo,
To make the torments of the Damn'd compleat.

And to its Height my cruel Destiny
Is rais'd, while I'me deny'd all hope to dye.

XXVII.

He to its primitive, and simple state
A base, corporeal Nature, would restore.
And to be Chief in Heav'n will elevate
A vile Mass, that was earthly Slime before.

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Ple not endure't, i'th North, I le try my Fate,
Mong whose salt cliffs the Angels never seare. (fly
And though, even thence, my Troops may vanquishd
'Twill be a Trophy to have ventur'd high.

XXVIII.

But why his Will unsatisfy'd ? pretend
To rob of Souls my Ancient Mansions? why
Himself so absolutely apprehend
All Humane weight, to raise my rage more high?
And then a Conquerour to Us descend,
Rich in his Spoiles, and glorious Victory :
And flourishing his bright Armes here below
Come to disturbe Me in my Endless wo ?

XXIX.

Ah, art not thou that Creature once so Faire ?
The glorious Prince of beauty and of Love!
The Star, enlightning first the Morning aire,
Prime Light of all the winged Quire above ;
Which as the Moon, when lesser Stars appear,
Above their Luster, doth her rayes improve.
So rich in splendour, and in flames Divine,
Above the Vulgar Angels Thou didst shine.

XXX.

Wretch! but in this Dispair, what can it Me
Avail, to think upon my Pristine state?
If past Felicities, remember'd, be
So harth, and present Ills ingeminate ;
'Tis time the Acts of such an enemy
To oppose, and his too haughty pow' er abate.
If Hell must Languish, let not Heav'n rejoyce
If Force cannot prevail, then Fraud's my choice.

XXXI.

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XXXI.

But what Force is't I fear ? long since have I
 Lost ancient Candour, and high Nature too
 Let the world Arm, and Heav'n; with terrour my
 Sole Nod the Elements, and Stars shall view.
 I'me what I was, whate're arrive : and why
 If not the Doer, fear I what He'll doe?

God Arm's : what then ? I best that war approve
 Which, since deny'd in Heav'n, on Earth I le move.

XXXII.

All praise his haughty Language, and anon
 Their Fronts the Three Fierce Sisters higher threw.
 All shake their Lamps, from *styx*, and *Ackeron*
 To Him all Serpents craule, and homage doe.
 See here ! how prompt, how ready every One
 Of us appears, thy pleasure to pursue,

Great Lord of this most dreadful House (say they)
 Doe but command and we will soon obey !

XXXIII.

→ Your first so brave Attempt in Heav'n, did prove
 What your *Aleño*, with her friends could dare
 Nor though in these dark Mansions now you move,
 And with these rusty Roofs still cover'd are,
 Ought You to be less proud. For, though Above
 To the great Thunderer You Subject were ;

→ Yet, here You are a King whose Empire is
 Free, and entire on Earth, and the Abyss.

XXXIV.

If Wit, and Industry shall prove too weake
 Vertue of Herbs, of Stones, or powerful Spell,
 Anger, Deceit, or Love, by which Men break
 Oft into bloud, and cruelly rebel.

Thou

The Slaughter of the Innocents. 11

Thou (which must please Thee) shalt behold my Beck
Draw Stars from Heav'n, & Ghosts from Graves compel
The Seas shall quake, Earth up-side down be hurl'd
And from its Center We will force the World.

XXXV.

He (Fierce) reply's O my dear Props, O true
Supporters of my Hopes, and of my Throne!
I've seen your Arts, I've seen your Valour too
Which in that Starry Mount, y've clearly shown.
But, though in all I doe confide ('tis true)
I've at this instant need of one alone.

'Tis Cruelty alone, I now require,
That can from doubts my jealousy retire.

XXXVI.

Of the Three Goddesses of Mischief, She
A worthy Sister, fierce above the rest
Employs her bloody Wings continually
To view those ill-born Troops, that men infest,
Busy with Food Immortal to Supply
Those Flames, where black Souls, boiling are oppress'd.
In the profoundest Secret depths of Hell,
Where Sorrow, and Eternal Weeping dwell.

XXXVII.

Most sadly thrice the dismal Caverns houle:
Thrice the deep Shades like smoaking Cannon rore.
Then from dark, unknown Gulphs, the Waves that roul,
And quarries, thunder on *Creytus's* Shore.
The noise She heard, and with a squinting Scoul
From thence reverts her eyes inflam'd with gore.
And her reply, to her most dreadful Name
Her Snaky Locks with a dire Hiss proclaime.

No

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XXXVIII.

No House more terrible, more dark in all
 Death's Region, then this was made by Fates
 'Gainst cries of others, who for pity call,
 Stil shut, rough Adamants compose the Gates.
 The fix'd Foundation is of Iron, the Wall;
 Of Jasper is, which nothing penetrates,
 And Heads, which blood, and filthy gore besmear,
 With limbs lopt off, are scatter'd every where.

XXXIX.

➤ Revenge has here her Throne, and in her hand
 Waving a naked Sword, all bloody, sets,
 Near her Disdain, with senseless Fury, and
 ➤ Fierce War, with Slaughter, that still pants and sweats.
 Far off they easily may understand
 Impetuous Rage, like mad, to vent her threats.
 Midst these, with grim Aspect, proud death commands,
 And turns his mighty Sythe with both his hands.

XL.

➤ Upon the Walls they horrid Engines see,
 By which, so oft, poor Mortals Plagues endure,
 That through the House, as dreadful Tapisry,
 Are hung, the worst that mischief could procure ;
 Their Wheels, Chains, Gibbets, Spears, & Grindstones be,
 Nails, Axes, Swords, with other Furniture ;
 All steep'd in blood, and bear the horrid stain
 Of Brothers poyson'd, or of Fathers slain.

XLI

At her detestably sad Table sit
 ➤ The Harpies, with devouring Famine: There
 Inhumane *Erisiction*'s appetite
 Untam'd, calls, every moment, for repair ;

While

The Slaughter of the Innocents. 13

While *Progne*, *Tantalus*, fierce *Atreus* sit,
With infamous *Lycaon*, their curs'd Fare;
And dire *Medusa's* hand supplies them all
With frequent Boulds of Bloud commix'd with Gall.

XLII.

The dire *Eumenides* (her Sisters) still
Attend, with flaming torches in their hands ;
Her Servants, *Sylla*, and proud *Jezabel*,
With *Circe*, near to whom *Medea* stands,
The Damsels of her Court, for all commands,
The *Parce*, cruel, and inflexible :
Whose hands her Robes, of blackest threads of Life,
Compose, cut off by their Impartial knife.

XLIII.

This dismal House is circled by a Grove,
Where fatal Trees their baneful shadows spread ;
Each Plant's a Plague, and all Flow'rs poysons prove ;
The Winds are sighs, the floods tears lately shed :
Within fierce Minotaurs, and Cyclops move
In heards, and, by the gloomy air are fed :
In troops Hyenaes, Dragons, Tygers, there,
Sphynx, Ceraustes, Hydra's, and Chimeraes are.

XLIV.

Ferous Dogs, horses of *Diomed*,
Iberodamas his furious Lions, there
With bloud, profane *Busiris* Alters fed ;
Proud *Sylla's* Prisons above all severe,
Cruel *Procrustes*, strange, and dreadful Bed ;
And Lestrigion Tables there appear :
To these his Impious Rocks fierce *Sciron* joyns,
And cruel *Scinis* his tormenting Pines.

Such

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XLV.

Such tortures as by dire *Mexentius*,
Nor by *Gerion* could invented be,
Or *Ochoj*, *Ezelino*, *Phalaris*,
Or *Nero*, ever fear'd for cruelty :
There all the flames, and knives of Barbarous
Nabucco, *Acabbes*, and *Pharaoh* they see :
Such is her Mansion, and with horrid cries,
On active Wings, thence this Fourth Fury flies.

XLVI.

Scarce then to her the secret of his mind,
The Prince of this black Empire did disclose,
But freight from Hell swifter than swiftest Wind,
Or Lightning, from his bloody Gates she goes,
And as the face of Heaven serenely shin'd,
The pallid stains of Death upon it throws,
While to the ground the poison'd Birds at sight
Of her alone fall dead amidst their flight.

XLVII.

From this dark Gulph, soon as this Monster came,
To vomit thus her Hell against the Day,
The Flow'rs, and Herbs, as by contagious flame,
Or Winter's fury blasted, freight decay ;
She, with her frown, could Nature's active Frame
Make stupid, and th' Eternal Sun dismay,
Conceal the Stars, and Elements beside,
Did not her Serpents her curs'd Visage hide.

XLVIII.

Already from his secret shady Den
Dull *Somnus*, chief Companion of the Night,
Rose, on his lazy Wings, and eyes of Men
With welcom theft, depriv'd of tedious light ;

And

The Slaughter of the Innocents. 13

And with a pleasing tyranny had then
Shed his *Lethean* Water on their sight.

While various wanton dreams, and calmest rest,
As Lords, their senses, and their thoughts possess't.

XLIX.

With black, and nimble pinions, soaring high,
To *Bethlaem* then *Erynnis* was convey'd.

For there Usurp'd, with greatest cruelty,
And restless cares, the King his Scepter sway'd)

And as with impious, fatal Torches, She,
A bloody Feast, at *Iebes* appearing, made :

Into all roomes o'th' Royal House She pries,
Searching with careful steps and busy eyes.

L.

Herod, Augustus Vassal, one now old

In years, possess'd good *David's* Royal Place,
No lawful King, but of the Throne a bold

Usurper, and of *Idumean* Race.

For *Juda's* progeny no more did hold

Juda's Scepter, but was in disgrace.

And while, lost, ancient Honours they bewail'd,

Felt the sharp rigour of a Yoak entail'd.

LI.

Through all the lofty Palace now she goes,

Glides into most retired cabinets,

Where at great Ease, and pleas'd, with sweet repose

On Softest plumes the King his cares forgets.

Nor will She (foul perfidious Fiend !) disclose

Her self, in her own Shape, which Hell befits.

But changing first her Face, and habit, made

Herself a pallid Ghost, and fleeting shade.

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LII.

All that She had of Fury, off She throws,

And instantly a mortal Form She takes

* *Joseph's* aspects, his meen, his action shows.

Such, and as big as He, herself She makes.

Then to the King, oppress'd with sleep, She goes,

Her cold hand chills his Heart, and then he Wakes.

While thus disguiz'd, an Humane Voice She feigns,

And Him 'twixt sleep, and waking thus arraigns.

LIII.

What Sleep'st thou Fool? and as when every part

Of the *Egean* Sea, thick Storms surround,

To the fierce winds, and waves, his Helm, and Art

A slothful Pilot quits, whom fears confound.

Thou art here idle, and thy warlike heart

In sloth, thy senses in repose are drown'd.

Nor dost regard, or know, what mischiefs thy

Strong Fates now threaten, and are very nigh.

LIV.

Know, that from ancient race of *Hebrew* Kings,

(As fruit unhop'd for, from a Stock that's dry)

A child (though poor) that with Him wonders brings,

As soon as born, with beasts on straw doth ly.

Of this new branch th' ungrateful *Vulgar* sings,

(Too much his Friend, to thee an Enemy:)

Their praise: Him follows, and, already, Fame

Stiles Him their King, and thy Successor name.

LV.

O what Seditions, Plots, by him design'd!

What Engines! in his brest He fire does bear.

In's hand the Sword; even now 'tis in his mind

To mix fell poison, with thy princely Fare.

The Slaughter of the Innocents.

17

Nor one to curb his Fury canst thou find,
Or that his Treason will to thee declare.

Go then, with laws, and Armes what's safe pursue;
And this vile people to thy Rule subdue.

LVI.

I'm He, who once thy Scepter to maintain,
To establish in thy hand, that Noble weight,
My Life, and Bloud have ventur'd, but in-vain, --
Have I my bloud spilt life expos'd to Fate?
On lighter reasons, Thou thy sword didst stain
In Thine own brother's bloud, and sons of late.

But now intent on other Cares: why so
Irresolute (when more concern'd) and slow?

LVII.

Up, why dost stay? what business hinders Thee?
What folly? rouse thy self; this sloth forsake.
Already, wretched! rouse thy self, and see,
What sword hangs; or 'e thy Head! rise, and awake
Thy dour spirits, hence let thine anger be
Worthy a King; new Armes, and Fury take.

I th' sword, and bloud thy servant I will be
Invisible (thy Brother's shade) with Thee.

LVIII.

Thus She, and straight her *Amphisbena*, fed
By foam of *Cerberus* (which then she wore,
About her left arm twin'd) its poison shed
On's heart, and hissing irritates him more
Then flames, that strike all sense of Vertue dead,
Her breath into his veins, at once, doth pour.
This done 'mong deepest, and most secret shades,
To hide Herself, she Hell again invades.

His

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LIX.

His sleep thus broke, while cold sweat overflows
His limbs, the King starts from his troubled bed,
Which though molt rich, and stout to's fancy shows,
A field of battle; and with thornes o'respread.
His memory nothing he had seen forgoes,
And keeps imprinted deep whate'r was sed.

With grief, and anguish fill'd, from hope he falls,
And, mad, for Armes with threats, and fury calls.

LX.

As when the food of flames, the wealthy spoils
Of fields are made, and kindled are by breath.
The hollow brass grows hot, and while it boils
With vapour mix'd, it smoakes, and murmureth.
Then proudly swells, and like a Serpent coiles
About the brims, foames, and rolls from beneath.

At length o'reflows, and strives t' extinguish quite,
Those very flames, that rais'd it to that height.

LXI.

So *Herod* troubled, and perplex'd to hear
Another rose, who might disturb his reign;
His discontented soul, late chill'd with fear,
Now burnes with cruel anger, and disdain.
He plots, impatient such a wrong to bear,
To cut him off, his thoughts are still in pain.

And in the night while others silent are,
In rest, rejecting peace he seeks a war.

LXII.

Many Prophetique signs had long before,
Imprinted in his heart this doubt, but when
The tributary Kings their way explore,
From a strange climate, through his Kingdom, then

The Slaughter of the Innocents. 19

A silent wrack of fear torments so sore,
His bloody, and inhumane thoughts agen,
That his suspicion, awak'd, renews
Th' infernal shade, which, restless, still he views.

LXIII.

Soon as the East had issued out the Day,
(The air not yet from clouds, and darkness clear)
His summons all his Princes must obey,
In Counsel at his Palace to appear.

His Serjeants streight, and Heralds, every way,
Are sent, and busily the Message bear.

By them his chiefs, and vassals understand,
From whom they come, and what is his command.

LXIV.

But (*Herod*) what's thy fear? or whence so dire
A thirst of blood, that, now, inflames thy heart?
The King of Kings assumes man's form entire,
Not to command, but act the servant's part.
Nor came on Earth thy Kingdom to acquire,
But with his own t' enrich thee, 'bove desert.

Oh vain, and foolish fear! that he his own
Should thus bestow, t' usurp anothers throne.

LXV.

He born indeed to rule, but not for war,
A poor, neglected, naked Babe is found,
A tender Virgin's milke his onely far,
In a small Cradle and poor blankets bound :
His souldiers shepherds, his armes, swathbands are,
With thatch a Cottage (his high Palace) crown'd.
His Trumpets are his infant-cryes, and those
Dull beasts, the *Oxe*, and *Ass*, his train compose.

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Stanza II.

Antonio de Toledo, Duke of Alva, Viceroy of Naples under Philip, the second, King of Spain, famous for many great Actions in the service of his Master in the Wars of Italy, Flanders, and Portugal, to whom our Authour Marino, was rather a Friend, then a Domestique servant, though after his return to Naples (whence he was in a sort banish'd for some years to satisfy the malice of some men) he continued in the family of that great Man employ'd in his most important affairs, till he died in the 56 year of his Age An. 1625.

Stanza XVI.

This General fall of Idols, in Ægypt was prophesied by Isaiah (cap. 9. v. 1.) but it is remarkable in Ecclesiastique writers (as Eusebius, &c.) that Joseph, and the Virgin Mary, either by design, or curiosity, bringing the Child Jesus, into one of the stately Temples in Hermopolis (where they made their first abode) all the Idols immediately fell down, and were broken in pieces. Euseb. de demonstr. c. 20. Athanas. de Incarnat. verb. &c.

Stanza. LI.

M. Antony having crucify'd Antigonus (which as Dion observes (Vit. Cæs. Octav.) was never done to a King before by the Romans) gave the Crown of Judæa to Herod (an Idumæan, by descent, and of no Regal line) which Augustus afterward confirm'd.

Stanza

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21

Stanza LII.

* Joseph brother to Herod commanded his Army against Antigonus, and as he besieged Jericho, was driven into streights by Pappus (Antigonus his Lieutenant) his Army routed, himself slain and his Head, cut off, was sold to Herod by the Enemy for 50 talents.

The End of the First Book.

B 4

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THE SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS.

BOOK II.

The Counsel of Peers.

I.

NOW to the golden Car, that bring's the Day,
The morning Virgins had the Harnes join'd,
And at the Gate, that doth the Light display,
Phabus enthron'd (the Stars dispersing) shin'd,
And chasing fleeting Dreams, and clouds away,
His nimble Train of Messengers combin'd,
That shining Shades, through every Clime should fly,
And scatter Rosy Blushes through the Sky.

II.

When streight the Senators together come,
By Guards conducted to a spacious Hall;
Where Silken Images appear t'assume
Life from the Artist to adorn the wall.
Their Story was the most unhappy doome
Of *Mariamme's* Love, and *Tragique* Fall.
The Work the Spoile o'the Babylonian Loom,
The stately Hangings of a stately Roome.

Re-

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III.

Regarding little, all the Wealth was there,
The curious Work, and costly Tapistrie,
To th' King they hast, and busily prepare,
I' th' Royal Senate (each in his degree)
To take his places, as they distinguish'd were
In bloud, or tittle, year, or dignitie.

Some near Him, some more distant, in their Tribes
Of Princes, Rabbines, Pharisees, and Scribes.

IV.

To his high Throne, most royally array'd,
(A Work of greatest Pompe, and Wondrous state,
Which by a good, and peaceful King was made,
And admiration did in all create)
Himself the cruel Tyrant streight convey'd,
And all the Rest beneath about Him sate.

Form'd like an heart, the Seat he sate upon
Was a choice Ruby, and a single Stone.

V.

The Foot pace, where his Feet did proudly tread,
With stiffest cloth of gold was overlay'd.
A Royal Canopy, above his Head,
The Starlike Beams, of various gems display'd.
The six large stately Steps, which thither led,
Of whitest, polish'd Ivory were made.

And as his furious Guards, on either hand,
At every Stair, two golden Lyons stand.

VI.

Here soon as sate, grown pale, He, frowning thrice,
The trembling Company surveys around.
Then turning up to Heav'n his bloud-shot eyes,
Strait downward look'd, and fix'd them on the ground.

And

The Slaughter of the Innocents. 25

And in one act, his griefs, and threats implies,
While both within, though not express'd, abound.
Yet he complains not, but, as winds the rain,
So sighs, and rage, a while, complaints restrain.

VII.

His Scepter and his Throne, at once, he shooke,
And stamping fiercely, his dire Rage to shew,
From's Head, its Ornament, and Honour tooke,
(His Golden Crown) which he doth sighing view,
Then from his Chin, with a disdainful looke,
The hoary hairs, like bristles, singly drew.

At length, the flood of grief, and fury broke
From his swoln, livid Lips, and thus he spoke,

VIII.

What terrours (Princes) what new shapes of fear
Disturb, at midnight, my profoundest rest ?

What phantoms, visions doe I see, and hear ?

What cruel stings of cares torment my brest ?

Poor men ! who must this weight of trouble bear !

Oh wretched Kings, whom dangers still invest !

And to the plots of Foes must *Herod*, made

A Victim, in his Palace be betray'd ?

IX.

Ah, tis my grief, to find, that now the bold

Usurper of my Throne, cause of my fear,

So long by *Jewish* Oracles, foretold,

Within the walls of *Bethlaem* should appear.

My self, of late, did forrain Kings behold,

From th' East, to him, their wealthy tribute bear,

And to their Home, with breach of faith, which they,

To me me had given, return'd another way.

And

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X.

And now, by this my Scepter, and my Crown,
 I swear ! to Me (whether I were awake,
 Or morning slumbers did my senses drown)
 All this before my brother *Joseph* spake ;
 These eyes him pensive saw, and sadly frown,
 And his known voice (whose language made me quake
 These very ears have heard, what secrets he,
 Of present dangers hath declar'd to me !

XI.

Could I *Arabia's* Pride, and *Egypt's* too
 Debell ? and by unusual means, of late,
 The treacherous *Atemion's* plots subdue,
 And all *Arbella's* conquering force defeat ?
Antigonus with victory pursue ?
 Kill *Pappus*, and destroy the *Rhodian* fleet ;
 Pacorus rout, and on *Hircanus* ('mong
 The rest most false) revenge, with fame, my wrong

XII.

And now, a people weak, whom I with care,
 Have cherish'd ; nurtur'd with a Fathers name ;
 I know not what poor Child (rebellious !) dare
 (While yet I live) their lawful King proclaim ;
 And do I sleep ? and, silent, tamely, bear,
 A King despis'd, a King betray'd, my shame ?
 And, with vain pitty, for Anothers sake,
 My self the object of their malice make ?

XIII.

Already I (me thinks) the Hostile cries
 Oth Infant, round about these walls, do hear.
 Yet cries they are not ; nor will I dispise
 Anothers tender age ; I, now, may fear.

The Slaughter of the Innocents. 27

Dire sounds of war, and of conspiracies,
Threatnings of death, and noise of armes they are.
Trumpets, which the base people fire with rage,
Against my Life, and Quiet to engage.

XIV.

But all this noise of dreadful Tumults, I
In sad, and mournful silence soon will drowne ;
And in an Ocean of cruelty,
Will, firmly, fix the Anchor of my Throne.
The Innocent, and Guilty, all shall dy.
Justice, and Rigours unto me all one.

For I'm resolv'd with Bloud, and Slaughter, now
My Royal Crown t' establish on my Brow.

XV.

I know, as yet, my Ruine sucks, as yet
Wrap'd up, in swadling-cloths, in secret lies ;
And, puiling, like an Infant, craves the Teat ;
But, I'll provide, he may not, prating, rise.
I know his Treason into armes would get
Against Me, and Me silently surprize.

But let him come, as speedy, as he will,
With certain vengeance I'll prevent him still.

XVI.

I shall no pleasing hours, no quiet know
Until a sea of bloud, by Me be shed ;
And that the blushing billows largely flow ;
And dy this purple with a deeper red.
My safty through a thousand wounds must show
It self (as through a thousand eyes) and spread
Vermilion characters, till it confound
All treason, and in it my fears be drown'd.

For

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XVII.

For tell me (you my faithful friends,) who, here,
In this our common danger, now are met,
Should I these flames, which (you perceive) so near
My kingdom threaten, carelessly forget?
Should I not, rather, while they thus appear
In Embers, smother them, before too great?
And shunning by another's wo, my fall,
To kill this One more certain, murder All?

XVIII.

This said, his silence straight a noise supply'd,
which through th' amaz'd Assembly humming goes;
Such, as when Northern winds the Sea divide,
Or rocks the waves imprison or enclose.
Or when the Bees, like murmur'ing armies hide,
The tops of flowers, where sweetest Nectar flows,
And on their laden wings th' odorous prey,
In Troops, unto their waxen Camp convey.

XIX.

But *Urizeus* straight reply'd, as one
Of nearest confidence, a Priest, who long
Had travell'd; many Lands, and Seas had known;
Had much observ'd, and much had seen, when young,
And now in's Master's secrets Aged grown,
For Judgement, and for Trust perfer'd among
The Chief, a bushy grove of Beard extends,
O're all his Face, and o're his breast descends.

XX.

Hony in's words, but snares that all surprize,
In's mouth are hid; his tongue with arrows stor'd;
His actions a grave countenance disguise;
His modest eyes a front serene afford.

The Slaughter of the Innocents. 29

candid stile, his Voice accompanies;
his Looks give emphasis to every word;
And from his Lips, when He his story told,
Flow'd streams of purest Milk, through veins of Gold.

XXI.

he hazards much said He, (Great Sir) whose
refuses in this affair, to counsel you,
or, if my counsel different appear,
your anger (which I dread) may Me pursue;
or if to your resolve I should adhere;
Gainst justice, and my duty, that's worse too,
A traitor to my Country God, and King,
I, to my Self shall certain ruin bring.

XXII.

Yet shall I not conceal, what now to mind
I call, and in my Youth have prov'd, and try'd,
That rash resolves, and hasty, seldom find
an happy End, or can the Test abide;
Nor should He, who's to furious Acts inclin'd,
Hope other, or expect ought else beside.
For 'tis a crime in wisemen (all consent)
First not to think, and, after, to repent.

XXIII.

Do then what best may seem, their fierce desire,
who do, so lightly, snatch the easy Rain,
With which an hand so gentle doth conspire,
Reason advis'd must with hard curbs restrain;
who their stiff necks, from th' yolk of laws retire,
A free Prince cannot, ought not to maintain.
Yet the Lawgiver should observe his Law,
And men to obedience by example draw.

What

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XXIV.

What boots it, that a King of greatest might
Should, with an happy Scepter, Kingdoms sway?
If afterward the peoples appetite
(Like an unhappy slave) he shall obey.
Things that to loose desires, and rage invite,
Wound generous Souls, and to ill fame betray.
But he that for anothers blood doth thirst,
As cruel, by the King of Heaven is curs'd.

XXV.

And, if in vilest souls, of lowest fame,
That in the oblique path of sense do tread,
This raging fury is esteem'd a shame,
When beyond rule, with it the spirits are fed:
Oh, how much more from souls of highest name,
From Princes hearts, should this be banished.
Oh how much more should they their wills refrain,
And from this cruel precipice refrain.

XXVI.

For as the Region of Heav'n above,
Is always, in it self, serene, and pure ;
Where nor dark clouds, nor earthy vapours move,
To hide its Brightness, or its Light obscure.
Or as *Olympus* doth his height improve
Above all showers, or Thunder to endure.
So in a Noble Brest, and Royal mind,
We seldom storms, or noise of Fury find.

XXVII.

Laws were, at first, for terrour rather made,
Then always to be rigorous, and severe ;
Their execution should be gently lay'd,
If the offence an easy hand will bear.

The Slaughter of the Innocents: 31

'Tis fit strong whips correct, and guide the Jade,
Yet then still feel them, let him rather fear.
Jove, when he thunders, with the dreadful noise,
Doth many terrifie, but few destroys.

XXVIII.

Forbid it Heaven ! that I my Prince perswade
Unto so Brutish, so accurs'd a Deed ;
That my dear Country should be desert made,
That Ruine should so great esteem succeed :
Or that so brave a City waste be laid,
And by a Civil Sword to death should bleed :
Poor the Command, and vile the Scepter, when
The King a Kingdom wants ; the Captain men.

XXIX.

'Tis clearly open what you have in view,
But what you fear is doubtfully obscure ;
After so long experience, will you
For future profit present loss endure ?
And through vain fear of Ills that may ensue,
A certain mischief to your self procure ?
A mischief that perhaps brings with it more,
And greater ruines than you fear'd before.

XXX.

Do you suspect a War, and yet intend
So many of your Youth should murder'd be ?
Who knows but, 'mong the new-born, y'ave a Friend
Of greater value than your Enemy ?
Tell me (for Gods-sake) then who shall defend
Your Crown, or arm for your security ?
If an whole Army in its growth, and spring
You shall unseasonably to slaughter bring ;

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XXXI.

What then will Fame Report? Alas! that Fame,
Which Truth, and Falshood does, alike, declare.
She'll say that Thirst of Bloud did you enflame,
To fain them Rebels, who most faithful were:
A People who adores, and loves your Name:
Who far remote from your Paternal Air,
Amidst the Tumults, that your Throne invade,
A constant Faith, and true Obedience paid.

XXXII.

Nor would I credit (Sir) your Brother's shade,
That some nights since seem'd to appear to you;
I rather think, you then the sport were made
Of vainest Fancies, and of Dreams untrue:
Or that the Prince of Darkness did invade
Your thoughts, and them to those Illusions drew:
For (as I've read) Heaven's King doth never chuse
Fantoms for Messengers, but Angels use.

XXXIII.

And then, that King, whom you so apprehend,
Must not expect his kingdom here below;
Him spir'tual, and holy things attend,
In his, all Grace, with Love, and sweetness flow;
Immortal wealth doth from his Lap descend,
Although he be a King most poor in shew:
Then let your fears, that he brings Tumults, cease,
Since He to Earth descends to give it Peace.

XXXIV.

He most Pacifick, Mild, and void of Harm,
Will all Cœlestial Thunder lay aside;
And should he strengthen his most pow'rful Arm
Against Thee, how couldst Thou his Wrath abide?

The Slaughter of the Innocents. 33

O! how can You your self from the alarm
Of shining Troops of winged Armies hide?
Who can conceal himself? Or whither flee
From Him who all Things moves, and All doth see?

XXXV.

Whether this old Prognostick of your Crown
Be false or true does not, as yet, appear;
If vain, why is your Peoples Peace o'thrown?
Why should you raise their Scorn, or Hatred here?
With (for my part) that it false were known;
But subtile wits are busie, every where,
Such lewd Reports, with Art, abroad to fling,
To provoke God, and Man against the King.

XXXVI.

If in the Stars it be engrave'd and writ;
If Heav'n decrees that this great Babe be born,
Why should you Fate oppose? What can the wit
Of man avail? Why should your Subjects mourn?
Publish in vain your Edict, and with it,
Your Threats, and Fury to the Peoples scorn.
Yet, maugre all, He'll live, and grow, his Birth
Heav'n will protect, and hide him here on Earth.

XXXVII.

Fly (Sir) that Infamous, and Foolish Name
Of a King cruel, and with Clemency
Suppress that furious and swelling Flame;
Let your wise brest with prudence temper'd be;
Suspend your Anger, be still kind, and calm;
Let Justice from all violence be free;
Search out the Guilty, and on him let all
The punishments, that now are threaten'd, fall.

XXXVIII.

Farther would this grave Counsellor enforce
 His fluent speech, with reasons grave, and wise,
 But that he saw the King, at his discourse
 Offended, did his Eloquence despise ;
 Tossing his head than a chaf'd Tiger worse,
 Or wounded Bear, he turn'd his envious eyes ;
 He saw him in his forehead, and his brow
 Resolv'd, no such good counsel to allow.

XXXIX.

➤ *Burucco* was a Lord of haughty mind,
 Bred up in Court, and hoarse with murmuring ;
 A false, and envious Knave : Always inclin'd
 To mischief 'gainst the Kingdom, and the King ;
 Hot-headed, and with sudden Fury blind,
 Affecting bloud, and all to ruine t' bring.
 A stranger to all Pity : no regard
 Of Nature could his cruelty retard.

XL.

Bald-headed, he (his Chin shav'd close) had still
 A vigorous Body, and an active Mind ;
 But mong his few black hairs (against hiswill)
 Through cozzing time, the scatter'd silver shin'd.
 This Flatterer, intent to pick some ill
 From this grave Speech, a constant ear inclin'd :
 And, fixing on the King a steady look,
 Stood up, and kneel'd, then sat again, and spoke.

XLI.

Sir, you have labour'd much, and toyl'd in Wars,
 And as your valiant, and victorious hand
 Hath many deadly wounds, and bloody scars
 Fainted on Foes, that did your Pow'r withstand :

The Slaughter of the Innocents. 35

So, many Mouths to praise, and strongest bars
To lasting Glory, and to high Command,
Y've open'd wide, and't may be said, your cares]
Have overcome your enemies, and years.

XLII.

Hence we may credit (with this Lord's good leave,
That with good Reason you have ground to fear ;
Envy in other shapes doth oft deceive,
And now perhaps doth some great thing prepare,
And plots how she of life may you bereave,
Or make your People Arms against you bear :
For upon Kings, it is decreed by Fate,
That Envy and Ambitious Greatness wait.

XLIII.

You govern (Sir) a People wild, and rude,
Affecting Troubles, ready to rebel ;
An heady, and inconstant Multitude,
Prompt to affront, and your Commands repel ;
A wise, and prudent Prince will soon conclude
To curb their Folly, and their Fury quell :
Their Mischiefs to repair with punishment,
And providently future Ills prevent.

XLIV.

A little spark may soon extinguish'd be,
Before 't encrease, and into flame be blown ;
And a small Leak at Sea, may easily
Be stoppt before the Bark be overflown ;
Wounds, when fresh open'd soon are heal'd we see ;
And Plants will eas'ly bow e're too ful grown :
But if this Gangrene a full growth obtain,
Force nought avails, and thoughts of Cure are vain.

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XLV.

It will become, that wisdom, you have shown,
By which your head under the cask's made grey,
By which your Nod is formidable grown:
You could your Sword before the Scepter sway;
To choak the Seeds of Mischief; Kings, or none,
Should this observe, to teach men to obey;
Then be upon your Guard, and still intent
T'avoid what tardy care cannot prevent.

XLVI.

He says besides (to which I shall consent)
That Mercy best commends a Princes breast;
Us'd tow'rds the Loyal, 'tis an Ornament
But should not towards Traytors be exprest:
Its value, and esteem is lost, if spent
On guilty Traytors, whom the Good detest:
Justice and Mercy are Companions, and
On them all Royal Vertues firmly stand.

XLVII.

But, I'll say more, you know, as yet your Throne
Is not well fix'd at Root these stocks to bear;
Tender and young is your Dominion,
And a new Lord's allow'd to be severe;
And, that your Power may be with Terrour known,
You rather Cruel should than Just appear.
If Duty's Reason, to your Wrath gives way,
Reason of State should have a greater sway.

XLVIII.

When Honour, and a Kingdom are at stake,
Th' unusual part doth Reasonable seem;
And Cases of importance often make
Temerity like Prudence in esteem:

But fear doth now the shape of Prudence take,
'Tis Cowardize, which some will Pity deem.
You should not have a thought of what is done,
When it concerns your safety, and your Throne.

XLIX.

And, if from this so great severity,
No other good, or wish'd effect arise;
Yet none, at least, will dare, through Memory
Of this Example, Treason to devise;
If, of so many he Survivor be
Who will assist his Arms and Enterprize;
Since the past slaughter is their Terrour made,
And none are left to lend him strength or aid.

L.

But let us grant, that none shall ever dare
To machinate a Plot against your Crown;
Yet need you not the Fame or Title fear
Of a fierce Tyrant, or a cruel one;
But of a Just and Prudent Prince to share
('Mong knowing Men) the Honour and Renown,
If to the Innocent you seem severe,
And Terrible, what should the guilty fear?

LI.

Add then, th' Almighty King of Heav'n is He
Who always Kings protects, and guards the great;
They are most dear to God, who's pleas'd to see
That they on earth command, and keep his Seat.
If Herod now by him thus favour'd be,
That strange, and memorable signs repeat
His Messages, and shew what shall be done:
This I'll not urge, since to your self 'tis known;

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LII.

But that so new mysterious Star, that shin'd
In Heav'n, was not a Star by chance plac'd there :
But as a Tongue by God himself design'd
To say O King of Jews now, now beware ;
And those strange Kings, who by it led divin'd,
And among us express'd with voices clear,
Their search of this their King of *Palestine*.
What were they (Sir) but Messengers divine ?

LIII.

That the rude Vulgar, who, with greedy eyes,
Still seek a change, should to his sense adhere,
Is nothing strange : But that a Sage, a wise,
And Royal People should so vile appear ;
That they inspir'd, and full of Prophecies,
Like Sots, should Worship and Adore him here,
Leaving their Kingdoms to anothers care,
And in so sharp a season come so far.

LIV.

'Tis worth your fear. Let all his Kin, as one
Be punished, since they all will Him conceal ;
The Interests most ally'd unto a Crown,
Are Laws, to which for Justice we appeal :
That now the Traitor's born, if it be known,
And none accuse him, none will him reveal,
Then all are guilty, and it may be said,
All Rebels are, and y're by them betray'd.

LV.

Those whose soft hearts melt with Paternal Love,
Whom Pity to their Children does enflame :
Whom from Domestick Quiet nought can move,
But Injuries light, and Dangers easie name.

The Slaughter of the Innocents. 39

to their own sense, things feign'd, as real prove,
their Speech, and Counsel, to what pleases, frame :
Or too much fear of their own loss betray,
Or else, but lightly, others dangers weigh.

LVI.

who before my time, through toile and care,
and (not through Age) gray-headed am become ;
Who, with thee, 'gainst thy Foes, did every where
appear, both in *Arabia*, and at *Rome*.

shall not at all t' aver this Truth forbear :
suspicion to Great Kings is burthensome.

I've no design, this Truth commands me say,
I not my safety 'bove your danger weigh.

LVII.

This 'fore the World, and Heav'n I do declare,
You Judges are, and witness with the King ;
Who would for safety to the shore repair,
Himself in danger, by delay, may bring.
What boots it that you sad and pensive are ?
If you rule all you may do any thing.

To this (Sir) which is, now, expressly known,
Neither delay, nor pity should be shown.

LVIII.

In a weak Arm sometimes a Surgeon makes
But a small Orifice, and shews his Art,
In sparing blood, of which he little takes,
To preserve Life i' th' body and the heart :
And while the Patient, with horror shakes,
Doth often ease, by cruel Arts, impart ;
He burns, he lances, and confirms the cure,
While the weak parts the Fire and Knife endure.

Throw

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LIX.

Throw all your Wares and Treasure to the Sea,
 So that the Ship may safe on shore arrive;
 Take less and more ignoble Limbs away,
 If so the Head may be preserv'd and live;
 And justly (Sir) this Hebrew Plant you may
 of useles Branches, Buds, and Leaves deprive:
 That to the Royal Stock more place be given
 To spread, and rise, without restraint, to Heav'n.

LX.

Then let the Innocent, and Guilty fall,
 If Guilt by Innocence thus nurtur'd grow
 Though Thousands: let us sacrifice them all,
 So that the single Traitor feel the blow.
 Whether we Friends or Foes these Slaves may call,
 By th' Royal Sword, let their blood largely flow:
 With reason we may slaves to slaughter bring,
 If so from danger we preserve the King.

LXI.

Thus He; and streight with a less troubled brow
 The wretched King applauds whate'r he says;
 And standing fix'd in's resolution now,
 Deluded by the flatt'ring sound of praise,
 H' arose, and then doth their recess allow;
 His damn'd design contriving sev'ral ways;
 And like a foaming Viper, swell'd with rage,
 Makes haste, in blood, his Venom to engage.

LXII.

His silence still provokes him more with cares,
 Torments his breast, and sets a fire his mind;
 The Furies spur him on, with all the fears
 Of Death, and Jealousies, that Empires find;

The Slaughter of the Innocents.

41

What is it that an Ins'lent Tyrant dares
Not do, whose heart's to cruelty inclin'd?
Thus he presumes, and rashly doth pursue
To execute what's not in's pow'r to do.

LXIII.

The guilty Night from *Sion* now arose,
Ourcharg'd with Arms, and dark Eclipses crown'd;
Judas none so terrible as those,
To rise from the Abyss of Hell had found;
Wherever *Juda's* Lot th' Horizon shews
A Syrgian darkness covers all around:
So black the Firmament, as if 'twere made
Of clouds, condens'd to Adamantine shade.

LXIV.

The King, mean while, impatient of delay,
Mov'd, and spurr'd on by Impious cruelty,
Looks like a *Menade*, rolling every way,
Her eyes, at sound o'th' *Bacchanalian* cry,
He feels his heart within him restless lay,
Wounded with fears, that Vengeance must supply:
Yet such his looks, that he to all appear'd,
Rather surpriz'd with fear, than to be fear'd.

LXV.

He calls his Ministers, and such the vain
Force of his Rage, that he could hardly speak;
But like a Torrent, which, when Rocks restrain
Its course, streight back into it self doth break:
Shutting his Teeth, his broken voice again
Returns, and's words, within, harsh murmurs check;
Till from his Bowels the disorder'd sound
Broke out like Vapours from the trembling ground.

I will

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LXVI.

I will that all the Mothers, who reside
In *Bethlem's* Circle, to that Town repair,
With all their Children, that as yet abide
In Cradles, and but two years aged are ;
Your diligence in this shall well be try'd,
If their full number be to morrow there.

Thus he ; and straight the Royal Trumpets sound,
Sends his Decree through all the Country round.

LXVII.

The Tyrant nothing of his black design,
But's pleasure to conceal't, to all declares :
And that with fair pretences they should joyn
To cover all his plots, and cruel snares ;

The Women nothing know, nor can divine,
O'th' stratagem that 'gainst them he prepares.

Some with th' Edict are pleas'd, some frighted are,
Some think t' obey, and some with fear despair.

LXVIII.

Pity Divine (if yet thou dost abide
In Heav'n) since Thou from Earth didst thither fly,
Look down on us below ; behold the Pride,
And cruel Trophies of thine Enemy :
Wilt thou not now descend ? Have th' Hebrews cry'd
So long, and can their Mis'ries 'scape thine eye ?

Oh hear ! our only hope is, Thou wilt give
Some Refuge to keep *Israel's* Seed alive.

LXIX

Thus of her Children, like to be depriv'd,
Poor *Rachel*, in a sad, but pious tone,
Gave up her loud Complaints, which soon arriv'd
Above. The Goddess (to Compassion prone)

Willing

The Slaughter of the Innocents.

43

Willing to impede what *Herod* had contriv'd,
Prostrates her self before th' Almighty's Throne.
Gives freedom to her voice, and with a strain,
Mix'd with deep sighs, doth thus, aloud, complain.

LXX.

All-seeing eyes ! who are alone Divine !
Are you (said she) turn'd quite another way ?
Are you not mov'd ? or do ye now decline
The slaughter of these guiltless Babes to stay ?
Behold these Men, who now with Beasts combine
In new sad Arts, that savage hearts betray ;
Which are th' Infernal Serpents only Food,
From hunger of Gold born, and thirst of Bloud.

LXXI.

Art Thou not (Father) now, as heretofore,
The Jealous God of Wrath, and Vengeance too ?
Why then does yet thy dreadful Thunder roar ?
And thy dire Arrows wicked men pursue ?
Can't the lov'd Victim of the Lamb restore
Man to Salvation, and pay all that's due ?
One drop of that pure Spring's of such esteem,
And Price, as may a thousand worlds redeem.

LXXII.

Oh ! call to mind with what affection Thou
Th' Inhabitants of *Sion* once didst love ;
Were't pleas'd to call them Thine : their choice allow,
Their Priesthood too as Royal didst approve.
Of every Gate, of every House didst vow
To be their great Defender from above.
These thy Decrees with zeal and love were giv'n,
And can such Laws be now infring'd by Heav'n ?

Canst

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LXXIII.

Canst thou so far be angry ? Yet I'm sure
Thine anger's always Just and Holy too.
But, oh, what Angel is before thee pure ?
Heav'ns firmest Pillar trembles at thy view ;
I'll not oppose thy will (which must endure
Still fix'd) although warm Tears my cheeks bedew :
Thou know'st what pleaseth thee me pleaseth best,
Thy pleasure only gives me peace and rest.

LXXIV.

I only beg (if yet thou canst afford
Any just comfort may my Grievs allay)
That against me thou brandish not thy Sword ;
Me (who the sins of Mankind justly weigh)
But that the Hebrew Race, with so abhorr'd
Slaughter, ought now to perish, who can say ?
Or that condemn'd, and Guilty, he should fall,
Who knows no sin, nor merits pain at all.

LXXV.

But if for this thy Wrath, and dreadful Ire,
With all these Prayers, will not at all relent ;
Let these (the only Boon I now desire)
These sad complaints prevail, which now I vent.
Consider these deep groans, which I expire,
And with compassion these warm tears resent ;
To quench the flames of such approaching ills,
Thy Mercy oft Immortal show's distills.

LXXVI.

Oh if no force of Prayers prevail at all
With thee, who things Impossible canst do ;
Who sometimes rain'd down flames : Who canst recall
Hours past, and stop the Sun's swift Chariot too ;

The Slaughter of the Innocents. 45

If thou canst let thy Rod of Anger fall,
At these sad Charms, with which I prostrate sue !
At length with these my fervent Pray'rs comply !
Nor Pity unto Pitie's self deny.

LXXVII.

The Bosom of thy favours now expand,
Stretch down that Arm supports the world, and say
Jordan's Fair Nymph shall live : some drops command
Of sweetness, may her bitter things allay ;
Upon these cruel flames, with that strong hand
(Which to all Grievs doth perfect health convey)
Pour from those everlasting Springs above
Th' immortal streams of thy eternal love.

LXXVIII.

Thus Pity ; streight the winged *Orphei* round
Double their notes, and on each golden Lyre
They Pity for the Hebrew Babes resound,
The voice of Pity runs through all the Quire ;
On her his eyes, where Mercies do abound,
Th' Almighty turn'd from's Throne, where still entire
The Trinity in Unity alone
Distinctly shines, eternal Three in One.

LXXIX.

On's Forehead, where full Bliss the Angels view,
Life it self lives, and feeds for ever there ;
This only Springs, and Summers can renew ;
Trouble with storms, and then serene the air ;
From's Brow, the Sun (that he may still pursue
His Course) his light immortal doth repair ;
And the reflection of his holy eyes,
With Saphirs Heav'n, the Stars with Gold supplies.

His

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LXXX.

His Robe, of Texture not to be express'd
So Rich, it hides the Habit every were ;
Looks like the Sun (if yet the Sun when dress'd
In all his Rays, near him can bright appear)
A shining cloud he seems to make his Vest,
And for a Mantle cloudy Light to wear :

He shines so, that himself his own light hides
And in his proper Rays conceal'd abides.

LXXXI.

Known only to Himself, He All, within
Himself absconds. He Center is, and Sphere.
Immortal , still the same H'ath ever been,
Nor Life, nor Death from any else doth share.
Through all diffus'd, from Him all things begin
To move, and yield obedience every where ;

All comprehends , not to be understood,
But as chief Beauty, chief Delight, chief Good.

LXXXII.

New Pity, which all Rigour did allay,
Shew'd it was stamp'd in the Creators heart
And's eyes, tow'rds her fix'd kindness streight convey,
And livelier beams, with doubled Love impart.
He burn'd with Zeal, when an Abyss, a Sea
Of light, and flames from his bright face revert :
Whence Flouds of Fire, and splendour over all
The Sacred place like dreadful Torrents fall.

LXXXIII.

His voice shook both the Poles, and th' Axeltree
Bow'd, which the Worlds great Machine doth sustain ;
The Spheres streight lost their various Harmony,
And the whole Heav'ns their former Course restrain ;

Tigri,

The Slaughter of the Innocents. 47

Tigris, and *Ganges* to their Fountains flee,
The Bears both trembled, *Atlas* shrunke again;
When from the Mouth of the Almighty broke,
Irrevocable Fate, and thus he spoke.

LXXXIV.

O Happy, happy Thou! who onely can
My Divine anger from its course divert;
Who sweetnest my eternal cares for man,
My pleasure, and celestial Love thou art.
My Glory, Grace! whose tenderness began
First, through my bowels to pierce into my heart.
Thy prayers have gain'd me, and in all their parts
With pitty arm'd, are penetrating Darts.

LXXXV.

But how (my Muse) with wit so weak as thine,
Seek'st thou a Glory, not to be exprest?
Thou better what he is not may'st divine,
Then what he is. silence in this is best.
O, (with that kifs'd her) thou (said he) art mine
My dearest, sweetest pledge! for ever blest.
Can I with thee severely now proceed,
Who art my offspring, nay my self indeed?

LXXXVI.

Of nothing, I all things have made through thee,
The Aire extended, fix'd the fire above,
Into one pit collected all the Sea,
Prescrib'd the bounds to which its waves shall move,
Let loose the Springs, the Lakes, and Flouds, by Me
The *Abysses*, Pillars to the vast Earth prove.
I the World's stable Hinges did create, (weight.
On which the Heavens turn round, with all their

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LXXXVII.

Through thee, the Sun, and Moon : through thee alone,
The Stars with motion I've adorn'd, and light ;
Have made (amidst the Heavens swift motion)
The Poles stand fix'd, rais'd winds by day, and night.
Made Fish to swim, and the wild Beasts to run,
Serpents to glide, and fitted Birds for flight.

The Earth, Hearbs, Plants, and painted flow'rs to bear,
And differenc'd the four Quarters of the Year.

LXXXVIII.

Of all my Works, I then resolv'd to frame
Man, as the grace, and Glory of the rest ;
The Worlds fair Image, of illustrious Name,
Which not the World alone, but Me express't.
In him, i'm pleas'd, Him my delight proclaim,
My chiefest work, resembling Me the best.

A Glorious, Noble Fabrick, and Divine,
In this, even all eternal Beauties shine.

LXXXIX.

But when the wicked One had overthrown,
So great a Grace (by whom you understand)
I hastned to repair : and thou alone
T'enlarge thy merciful, and thy holy hand.
Who could not dy at all, earths' spoiles puts on,
And Himself listeth in the mortal Band,
That He may finish, that great work below,
Which i've committed to him long ago.

XC.

The blood which he shall shed, we, here, decree,
Shall save the blood of all these Innocents ;
And my dear Church (which he will build) shall be
enrich'd with treasures, and all ornaments.

The Slaughter of the Innocents. 49

Nor after this shall justice, unto me
Complain of injuries, and discontents.

I (daughter) will not this pursue, nor may,
And yet I must, in part, thy griefs allay.

XCI.

These my first victims shall be *Herod's* crime,
And shame, and all their wrongs with honour crown'd;
Their griefs with joy, and glory most sublime,
Bright as the Sun shall shine in every wound.
And, if his cruel hand shall, at this time,
On Earth their Lives, and tender years confound.

A thread of Life more glorious shall be given
To them, by an eternal Fate, in Heaven.

XCII.

Ple make the King, of that dark World below,
Delude, and keep the impious Tyrant still;
Till time, and all things else maturer grow,
Which we, for common fasty, will fulfil.
They'l search for this great Birth, but he shall go
Secure, and fly safe guarded from all ill.

A flight of scorn, not as by fear pursu'd,
By which he'l vanquish Death, and Hell delude.

XCIII.

He spoke, and it was done, a winged Light;
O'th' ever blest Angelique Family,
Perceiv'd God's mind, which they know all aright,
By a sole glance of his serenest eye;
And from the World of everlasting Light,
To that of fading, and obscurity.

With wings, like feathered Oars, doth streight repair;
Ploughs through the winds, and navigates the Aire.

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XCIV.

The beautiful spoils (i'th' twinkling of an eye)
 He of light aire, and divers colours takes ;
 Then from the highest part of Heaven doth flie,
 (As from a mighty precipice) and breaks
 Through the immoveable sphere ; and by
 Bright fires, and flaming Lamps his way he makes.

Then through the swiftly turning Orbs, and those
 That move obliquely, and more slow, he goes,

XCIV.

Arriving where the lowest Heaven its pure
 Chrystal with studs, of light condens'd, adorns ;
 From the cold frost of that moist Orbe secure,
 He downward glides, between the silver Hornes
 Oth' Queen, whose dewy Veile cannot endure
 The drying flame which gloomy shades adjourns.

Nor can the neighbouring heat at all impair
 His shining Wings, or hurt his golden hair.

XCVI.

From's naked shoulders a fit Vest descends,
 By his left side, of a most curious thread ;
 Where in celestial colours Art contends
 With Azure Gold, and white with purest Red.
 Two Skirts, girt at the waste, thence each depends
 Loosely, nor farther then the knees are spread.

Which, least they waving be too much display'd,
 A golden clasp restrains, with gems inlay'd.

XCVII.

Extended on his shining Back a pair
 Of ample Wings their glorious colours show ;
 Most choice perfumes enrich his curling hair,
 And to the aire the graceful Tresses flow.

Carbuncles,

The Slaughter of the Innocents. 51

Carbuncles, and immortal Rubies are
The Garlands, that invest his ivory brow.
His feet were hid, and lofty dancing, run
Through Gems are Stars, and Gold that is the Sun.

XCVIII.

Night disappear'd, and though the greater Light
Of Day, still under ground conceal'd his Rayes;
Yet the celestial flame, let loose to flight,
Like a Vice-Sun, in Heaven its beams displays.
Which, ventilated by his Wings, a bright,
Long tract of light, his way through th'aire betrays.
Shepherds deceiv'd, forsake their Beds, and pay
Their Orisons, as to the rising Day.

XCIX.

In *Ethiopia* there's a Dale, which high,
Aspiring Rocks, as in a ring, surround.
Where Sol from noon, till night can never pry,
Through the thick shade of boughs, that there abound.
Here with his dull, and lazy company,
The King of Dreams dwells, in abodes profound,
And in most solitary Grotts, and Caves,
Night quiet refuge, onely there receives.

C.

Of Ivory one, and one of Horn were made
Two Gates, at which Ease, and Oblivion stood,
And near them Silence, who, still listning, lay'd
His finger on his mouth, and with his Nod,
Through the mute Palace his commands convey'd;
Least beasts, or winds should shake the leaves o'th' wood,
In those close horrors, more then any where,
The plants, and flow'rs still languishing appear.

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CI.

No birds are heard to sing, the gloomy Sky
From Thunders free, through all this dark retreat ;
No Shepherds talke, nor eccho makes reply ;
Dogs never heard to bark, or Sheep to bleat.
Onely a purling rivolet, hard by
A Cave, doth through the stones its passage beat ;
By whose hoarse murmurs, those who there are lay'd,
Are to more Sound, and sweeter sleep betray'd.

CII.

Iust in the center of this darksome Cave,
The hermit God, affecting secrecie ;
Himself to plealing rest, and quiet gave ;
Stretch'd on a bed of leavy Ebonie.
Crown'd with soft Poppy, his left hand doth wave
A bough in *Lethe* steep ; and heavily
Nodding, his right supports his drowzy head,
And for his robe, a *Badger's* skin is spread.

CIII.

Scarce lifting up his dull, and half-shut eyes,
His brows still languishing, appear to frown ;
His head nods to, and fro, as if he'd rise,
Sometimes he seems, and streight again lies down.
Near him of cups, and bowls most large supplies,
And napkins that the smoaky table crown
With all choice meats, and wines that appetite
Might please, and odours that the sense delight.

CIV.

Directly hither streight the Angel flies,
Down from the *Empyrean* high degrees ;
And round about, in several Troops, espies,
With dusky wings, fallacious Images.

The Slaughter of the Innocents.

53

Yet could not their false shapes, celestial eyes
Deceive; but *Morpheus* he distinctly sees
With *Ithion*, and *Tantalus*, who there,
Struck with those Heavenly rayes soon disappear.

CV.

'Mong this black Troop of winged Spirits, a bright
And shining Damsel hover'd up, and down;
Her habit most transparent was, and bright,
Through which her limbs (to wonder fair,) were shown.
Her silver wings had eyes of various Light,
(Like *Peacock's* train) her name was Vision.

A guide to truth: the ancient Prophet's friend,
Whom God was wont on Embassies to send.

CVI.

Her Forehead was of Chrystal pure and clear,
On which delineated, and written shin'd
All Natures formes: all that created were,
Or yet to be created were design'd.

Written by God's own Hand, the character
Of Light (in stead of Ink) like Gold refin'd.

Here what to others often he conceal'd,
To's friends, as writ in paper, God reveal'd,

CVII.

The *Hebrew* Pilgrim the high mysterie,
O'th' Heavely Ladder here did comprehend;
Here *Egypt's* holy Pris'ner did foresee,
What did to him th' adoring sheaves portend.
The Captain of the chosen Progenie,
From th' un-burnt Bush beheld the flames ascend.
And Sacred *Poets* did the Truths discern
Of Heaven, and here a thousand secrets learn.

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CVIII.

Here the belov'd Disciple fill'd with high
Raptures, since leaning on his Mother's Brest,
In *Pathmos*, with Divine Sagacity,
In writing those great wonders hath exprest.
From's Earthly prison freed by extasy,
The Doctor of the *Gentiles*, 'mong the blest,
Saw things to mortal senses unreveal'd,
That were, and ever shall be still conceal'd.

CIX.

With her the Heavenly Nuntio th' Aire ascends,
Then swiftly o're the Earth, and o're the Sea,
Directly her resplendent wings extends,
To'ards *Fetiblaem*, where *Joseph* slumbring lay.
The Morn' that through the Heaven her blushes sends,
More clear their bright impressions did display
With all that was of wonder to be seen,
Or by the hand of Heaven there carv'd had been.

CX.

Vision the Morning loves, that season more,
Then any given by time sh'affects the best;
Because the soul is, in that pleasing hour
More from the flesh remov'd, and less oppress'd.
Turn'd to the Good Old man, she sets before
His thoughts, her face with all its glories drest.
That Diamantine Book, wherein all forms
Of things are written, and the fancy charmes.

CXI.

Joseph through these sure signes, was at a stand,
Till th' Angel the internal sense declar'd;
And he read there distinctly God's command,
Jealous that his escape he should retard.

The Slaughter of the Innocents.

55

Oh fly, fly (written in't with his own hand)
Thy dream's no cheating fancy, have regard
To this, which God's true oracle doth sing,
Fly this devouring Land, and cruel King.

CXII.

Too long among so great, so many snares,
Thou art secure and slow,---arise (I say)
Take heed the spise, which *Herod* now prepares,
Trace not thy steps, nor thy great Pledge betray.
Begone, and th' Holy Child (our chief of Cares)
Directly to *Canopus* streight convey,
And till from Heaven, a message thou again
Receive, from travel cease and there remain.

CXIII.

The Cofin of thy might charge, the Great
Son of *Elizabeth*, shall likewise be,
Far hence remov'd, and, in a safe Retreat,
Approaching slaughter shun (Heavens care is he)
He (the Divine Fore-runner ;) shall defeat,
(Though very young) their stratagems ; and free
Through Desarts go, there, for a city, take
Some wood, and, in a Cave his dwelling make.

CXIV.

Go then ; and from the dire, and impious Foe,
Or from the bloody Tyrant nothing fear ;
'Mong thieves, wild beasts, through armies thou shalt go,
Most safe, for God is with thee every where.
This said, the Dream, Sleep, and the Vision too,
To their dark Mansion fly, and disappear.
The Angel left him then, the dazzling light,
And flames, that seem'd to scorch him, vanish'd quite.

Astonish'd,

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CXV.

Astonish'd, and amaz'd he wakes at last,
And to his Virgin Spouse doth all disclose;
While she, inform'd from Heaven of all that past,
Fearless, and undisturb'd no sorrow shows;
He to the Cradle runs, and there, embrac't,
The Heavenly Babe, while tenderness o'reflows
His eyes, and bath'd him all in tears, h'express't,
A Father's Love, and hugg'd him to his breast.

CXVI.

O whither shall we go (my son said he)
(Yet thou my Love, and my Protector art !)
The danger is so near we cannot flee,
Thou Life of my afflicted Soul, and Heart !
Ah how untimely must this exile be ?
Sole flow'r of Jesse's Root ! divinest part !
With feet bound up in swath-bands, and so weak,
Is't fit a Pilgrimage to undertake ?

CXVII.

Yet must we fly, and thy celestial ayd,
Shall these weak limbs with strength, and spirit supply;
Heaven promises our way shall smooth be made,
O're Mountains, and o're Rocks most rough and high.
Let us through all by thee (Lord) be convey'd !
A thousand Lives, in this One's safety ly.
Me (frail old man) in the right way direct !
This tender Infant, and weak Babe protect !

CXVIII.

As thus the Holy Foster-father spoke,
While all to speedy flight now ready tend,
Tears from his eyes like sudden Torrents broke,
And through the Furrows of his Cheeks descend,

The Slaughter of the Innocents. 57

The Child embrac'd him with a smiling look,
And wip'd them off: and with a gentile hand,
(Compassionating Humane miseries) strokes
The old man's cheeks, and wash'd his hoary locks.

CXIX.

He, when he saw the Aire 'twixt night and day
Obscure, and all things now perswade to rest;
A burthen of his choice, and best array
Compos'd, and charg'd upon a gentle Beast.
Where the whole weight o'th' worlds salvation lay,
In swathbands, and, as in a Cradle dress't.

Oh Lord (said he) this equipage forgive!
And, that nor Gold, nor Purple thee receive.

CXX.

The haughty King, and impious Tyrant lyes
On costly beds, with sumptuous Ornaments;
Thee the vile work of lab'ring hands supplies,
With a poor covering, that the cold prevents.
Although, an ill-made Couch, which we devise
Of straw, and moorish reeds thee, here, contents,
I know thou triumph'st there above, the Sun
Thy Robe, thy Palace Heaven; & thrones thy Throne.

CXXI.

I know full well, all Pride thou dost despise,
Thy chieftest Treasure is, a Love sincere;
Thou above all degrees, the pomp dost prize,
O'th minds, and Hearts that Humble still appeare.
Thus reasons he; and while the Infant lies
On the rude plumes, that now in order were;
The burthen fix'd He, with the Virgin, slow
A foot behind their homely carriage go.

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CXXII.

Infernal monster! (Tyrant is too good
A title) thy sweet country now destroy;
Now feed thy impious rage with civil blood,
And th' appetite with griefs of Mothers cloy.
Behold, th' eternal Author of all good,
Maugre thy fury, safe a ready way
Retires, where he in a secure Exile.
Sees the high Cataracts of falling Nile.

CXXIII.

That Nile which deafneth all his neighbours ears,
And with fertility the Sands o'reflows;
That like a Sea in pride and rage appears,
And seaven full Urns into the Ocean throws.
That from his unknown spring, as Umpire bears
Himself, and bounds to *Asia* and *Affrick* shows.
And while he limits to the world preclames,
Imposeth on his Banks two several Names.

CXXIV.

He saw the famous Pyramids, those high
Mountains of Art; a Ladder each appears
To scale the Stars; or Pillars to the Sky,
Or stand as firm foundations to the sphears.
Under whose wings all Climates seem to ly,
And every hill the mighty shadow wears.
While their vast height denyes to all the Groves
The light, and hides the Sun whereere he moves.

CXXV.

He saw the *Pharos*, whose great light, far round
Diffus'd, their safest course to Ships assign'd;
The *Sphynx*'s image, with all wonders crown'd,
O'th Carver's Art, and truths to come divin'd.

The Slaughter of the Innocents.

59

The stately Labyrinth, where place was found,
For seven large Palaces to stand disjoin'd;
And the vast wall that far extended is,
And joins *Pelusium* t' *Heliopolis*.

CXXVI.

As born of the proud Flood he *Meris*, there,
Beheld, and the prodigious Lake discern'd.
The Colledge where eternal records were,
And Schooles whence *Greece* its Light and Glory learn'd.
The Caves for Bodies, that eterniz'd are,
By Cedar, Pitch, Bitumen, and are turn'd
To rare confections which the Merchants thus
Transform'd, as wholesome Mummy bring to Us.

CXXVII.

As a true Herald of the Vernal Sun,
Th' eternal offspring, wheres'ere he goes,
His Light, and warmth dispenseth, and upon
The sandy *Paretonian* land bestows.
The Rubie, Saphyre, Emerald streight begun,
Pth' barren Earth their riches to disclose.
The *Lyon*, *Tiger*, *Bear* their Maker know,
And *Crocodiles* their sense of duty show.

CXXVIII.

Streight winter his red Mantle lay'd aside,
And aged Face, while nature wondring stands,
To see how *April* all her Poms, and Pride
Pour'd largely on her, with most bounteous hands,
And with a rich, and stately dress supply'd
The needy Regions, and those naked Lands.
Untimely Honours grace each winter Thorn,
And flow'rs, as wedded to them, Frosts adorn.

Th

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CXXIX.

The gentle Breezes of the the wanton Aire,
With their inviting and melodious sound;
Pass through the amorous Palmes, and Laurels there,
And whispering shake their joyful wings around.
The hills, and dales, that plants odorous bare,
Delight their Maker; and the Mountains, crown'd
With trees, their lofty heads in Reverence bow,
And springs with murmurs court him, as they flow.

CXXX.

Nile his lost head, from his close fountain drew,
Hasting to kiss the Virgin's holy feet.
The waters seem to bow, and humbly sue,
With kind refreshment their faint limbs to meet.
Where're they trod, all herbs and flours straight grew,
And their new Sun adore with all that's sweet.
Birds from the trees, and Angels from above,
To praise, and bless him, pleasant Contelts move.

CXXXI.

A thousand, thousand flames, streight kindled were,
Of Heavenly Cupids, that in Troops around;
The Pilgrims follow, and through the aire,
With various dances spread th' harmonious sound.
These from the sleeping Babes sweet face, with care,
Wipe off nocturnal dews, (that there abound.)
Those over him, their plumes, and wings extend,
And from the winters cold, and frosts defend.

CXXXII.

A Warlike Spirit of the Etherial Band,
Whom Heaven ordain'd to be their convoy there;
Arm'd with a shining breast-plate, in his hand
A sword, that flames ejected every where,

Like

The Slaughter of the Innocents. 61

Like a bright Harbinger through dubious, and
Through crooked ways convey'd the humble pair.

Like him in habit, and in face, whom he,
Solately, sleeping, saw, and, waking, she.

CXXXIII.

Like that fair Bird, who of himself is Sire,
And Son, who (like the Sun) is one alone ;
Pyropus crowns his brows, his bright head fire :
Saphyrs, and Rubies he, for flight, puts on.
The Winged Troop their pompous King admire,
His Diadem of Gold, and Vermilion.

With joy th' attend him, and, with chearful layes,
The wonder of the blest *Arabia* praise.

CXXXIV.

Such 'mong th' eternal, holy Troops appears
Th' immortal Champion, *Joseph* stands amaz'd ;
While he the Light beholds, the Musique hears ;
His brows contracting, still, he upward gaz'd :
At length, while unknown accents fill his ears,
And on his eyes too great a Lustre blaz'd.

O' recome he falls, surpriz' with sudden fright,
At once depriv'd of hearing, and of sight.

CXXXV.

But divine vertue, with new force supplies
His weakned sight, and fainting sense repaires ;
Restrains the Object of his trembling Eyes,
And opens the Obstruction of his Ears.
Then 'gainst the Lightning he begins to rise,
And's shaking Hand like an Umbrello bears :
While bowing yet upon his staff he leans,
Which the whole weight of's weary Limbs sustains.

But

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CXXXVI.

But when fresh spirits had his strength renew'd,
And he could stand upon his Feet again,
His eyes he open'd by degrees, and view'd
Those Starry Mansions, where the blest remain.
While sudden tears of joy his cheeks bedew'd,
And broke his silence in this humble strain.

You Winged Troops, I thus salute to you,
Bright Squadrons of the Heavenly host I bow.

CXXXVII.

When freight through all the far extended coast,
'Twixt the two Seas, where wanton Natives dwell,
The mighty statues (*Egypt* us'd to boast)
And famous Idols into Ruines fell.
Their foolish Alters *Thebes*, and *Memphis* lost,
With those o'th' conquering *Greek*, which did excel.
Osiris, *Isis*, and *Anubis*, were
Silenc'd and broken, vanish'd into aire.

CXXXVIII.

As when a Troop of Thieves, that watch for prey,
And lye in ambush, favour'd by the night;
Soon as they see the Morn her beams display,
Quit their design, and are dispers'd by flight.
Or as those ugly Birds, that hate the day,
Soon as they see the glimmering of light,
Return with fear, themselves in shades to hide,
And neither can the Sun, or Light abide.

CXXXIX.

Such their false Gods, and profane Deities,
Shadows of night, and wholly void of power,
Before the true God vanish; their known lyes,
And cheats, no more prevaile as heretofore.

Amaz'd,

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Amaz'd, and full of fear, at this surprize
Their Priests collect their Reliques, and deplore
The Ruine of their silenc'd Gods, who all
Together, as by a strange earthquake fall.

CXL.

'Twas then those superstitious, and vain
Rites, which they us'd of old, did first decline,
And in believing Breasts did place obtain
The Faith, and Worship that's indeed Divine;
But, dear to Heav'n, *Joseph* his holy Train,
After that Light, that did before him shine,
Leads only from frauds, and danger wholly free,
And far remov'd from *Herod's* Treachery.

CXLI.

Yet nor in such remote, and distant ways,
Could he his apprehensions lay aside;
Not stately *Thebes*, whose hundred Gates did praise
Her wealth, and for her Walls was magnifi'd;
Nor yet *Hermopolis* his fears allays
O'th' Sword, so much, that he would there abide;
But, black *Siene* left, he forward past
To *Memphis*, that's in *Egypt's* Center plac'd.

CXLII.

Nor did the good Old man from thence remove,
Till Heav'n recall'd him to his Home again;
But with his Spouse, and Pledge of Heav'nly love,
In a poor Cottage with a Friend remain:
And there, the skill of 's aged Hand to prove,
He could not from his former Trade refrain:
But more than one Piece of his glorious Art,
Rarely engrav'd, did to the world impart.

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CXLIII.

He was an exc'llent Artist, and in high
 Designs, could well express his Art, and Skill,
 In Silver, Gold, in Wood, or Ivory ;
 His Stile was always ready as his Will.
 And now, grown old, a strong Necessity
 Rouz'd up his wits again, made cold, and chill.
 Necessity, which often counsels well
 And makes her Daughter Industry excell.

/ CXLIV.

Of Cedar, Ebony, and other rare,
 And high-priz'd Woods he ample Tables made.
 Great *Ptolomy's* long Line in Figures were
 Rarely express'd, and his vast Wealth display'd ;
 The Pilot's Lamp, and Urns of Kings were there,
 And *Nile* in all his Fertile Robes array'd ;
 And, by his labour, thus to gain his Food,
 Engrav'd in all its Glories *Egypt* stood.

CXLV.

Of these so celebrated Works, which Fame
 Through all the Cities had dispers'd, and told,
 He, with much sweat, and study, had the same
 (For the most part) before engrav'd in Gold :
 But scorning Fortunes Crosses, and the Shame,
 Turn'd to this Art, its secrets to unfold ;
 And what by his rare Industry was gain'd,
 His sweetest Consort, and dear Pledge sustain'd.

Notes upon the Second Book.

Stanza II.

Mariamne was Herod's most beloved Wife, of whom, at length, through many instigations of his Sister Salome, and her own insolent humour, he became so jealous that she had a design to poison him, that, at a Council he condemned her, and put her to death, which she suffered with great constancy and courage. Vide Jos. Antiq. Jud. l. 15.

Stanza XL

Antigonus (of whom before) was the last of the Asame-
nean Family, who had enjoyed that Crown one hundred and
twenty years ; his Army commanded by Pappus, Herod in
person defeated, slew Pappus, and sent his head as a Present
to his Brother Pheroras the Governour of Galile, in me-
mory of their Brother Joseph whom Pappus killed near
Jericho.

Atemion was Leader of a strong body of Thieves, who
lurked in Caves near Arbella, a City in Galile, against
whom Herod himself led some Troops, and after a stout
resistance (for his Van was defeated by them) he routed
them, and brought all Galile under his Obedience.

Pacorus was Lieutenant to the Parthian King, sent to the
Assistance of Antigonus, and the Arabians, whom Herod
subdued.

Hircanus was a Prince of the Jewish Nation, who when
once in Antigonus his power by means of the Parthian, he
procured

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procured his ears to be cut off, that so mutilated, he might be incapable to be chosen High Priest, should he recover his liberty, and return to Jerusalem. Herod procuring his liberty from the Parthian, took him into his protection, but fearing his popularity, and designing a Foreign Expedition, unwilling to leave him behind, or take him with him, got some to accuse him, as a Correspondent with the King of Arabia, and so put him to death.

Stanza CXXIII.

Nile at whose Original most Writers only guess, having (as Strabo affirms) in its Course in Ethiopia the addition of several other Rivers, hath two Cataracts: The first, after it hath passed Meroe (at the entrance of Egypt) some miles; and the other near Syene, both falling with that violence, that strangers are deafened by the noise, and conclude the Inhabitants likewise deaf because they take little notice of it.

Its Canopæan Mouth passeth by the Affrican; and by the Asian shore, that of Pelusium.

Stanza CXXIV.

Among the many Pyramids, three were most celebrated, the chief situate on the South-side of the City Memphis, on the Western Banks of Nile, the Foundation taking up eight Acres of Ground, and growing narrower by degrees, ascended by two hundred fifty five steps, each step three foot high, till the Top consisted only of three stones, yet so broad, that sixty persons might stand upon them. By what Engines raised,

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raised to that height, how brought thither from the Arabian Mountains, is difficult to discover. These were built by several Kings, but by which of them, and when, is best determined by the learned Sir John Marsham, in his late excellent Work, Chron. Canon. Egypt. pag. 47.

Stanza CXXV.

The Pharos, was a Watch-Tower, of prodigious height, built at the expence of Ptolomy Philadelphus, by Solstratus of Gnidos, all of white Marble, with many Lanthorns for Lights on the Top to guide Sailers by night over the dangerous Sands, and the Bar of Alexandria.

This Sphynxes Image was carved on a Rock, not far from Cairo, of a vast bigness: The head breast and back were to be distinguished when Christoph. Furerus was there, An. 1575. The head adorned with many Hieroglyphical Figures, was in compass 53 Paces, and near the Navil of it was a great Hole, in which the Priests (of old) concealed themselves, and gave answers to Votaries, which the people believed Oracular.

The Labyrinth was built by Psamnitius, and contained within one continued Wall a thousand Houses, and twenty two Palaces (some say more than as many more) of white Marble, into which was one entrance only, and so many turnings, and returnings, that they were impassable without a Guide.

Pelusium (as the learned Sir John Marsham observes) was the most ancient Fortification of Egypt, Erected by Sesostris, after he had expelled the Shepherds, and brought the whole Country under his sole subjection: to secure himself from the Incursions of Syrians, and Arabians he made this

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vast Wall, extending from Pelusium to Heliopolis (the Metropolis of that Division) near 1500 Furlongs, which the Prophet Ezekiel, Chap 30. 15 calleth the strength of Egypt, in whose time the Guards upon it consisted of 240000 men.

Stanza CXXVI.

The Lake Mareotis of a strange bigness, and profundity, supposed to be made by Art, because in the midst of it were two Pyramids of fifty Paces in height above water, and as many under, built by King Mæris to be sepulchres for himself, and his Wife. The Lake conjectured the rather to be artificial because the ground about it is very dry, and no Springs near it, but the water conveyed into it by Pipes and Conduits, answerable to the prodigious Labours of Egypt.

Among the Schooles of Egypt, those of Alexandria were the most eminent, where Ptolomy Philadelphus erected his famous Library, consisting of seven hundred thousand Volumes, and whence Learning was diffused into all Greece by several famous Philosophers, as Plato, &c.

Stanza CXLI.

Thebes, situate on the Arabian shore of the Nile, was once the Metropolis of all Egypt, renowned for its hundred Gates. Its last eminent ruine, in the time of the Roman Power, was some few years after the Battle of Actium.

Hermopolis, of which name were two Cities, Major, and Minor, this here mentioned is the Major, where at the

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the Toll was taken for Commodities brought down from Thebes.

Memphis was built upon the Western banks of Nile, not far from the extreme part of the Delta, where the River first divides it self, very rich in Antiquities, and stately buildings, whereof three Temples of Venus, Apis, and Serapis, beset with Sphynxes, were very famous.

Stanza CXLIV.

After the death of Alexander, Ptolomy, the Son of Lagus, seized on this Province, as his Part of that Empire, and made himself King of Egypt, and his Race continued two hundred and four years by the Succession of ten Kings, all of the same name, and ended in Cleopatra's Brother.

The End of the Second Book.

§

II

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THE SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS.

BOOK III.

The Execution.

I.

O that my Tongue, or stile as sharpe might prove,
 And strike as deep, as did the killing Sword;
 That with a thousand Wounds, I so might move
 All gen'rous Hearts in pity to accord:
 Or since, to shew such horrors, is above
 My vile and obscure Pen, *Arpin* afford
 Thine aid! thy Pensil it will best become
 To paint the story of this Martyrdom.

II.

Thy skilful hand, which Life and sense can give
 To shadows, and thy paintings animate,
 Can make the Murder'd Companies to live
 Again, feel wounds, deplore anew, their Fate;
 The Tyrant, and the Murderers revive,
 And them again to slaughter irritate;
 That these my Lines may imitate thine Art,
 Thy lively Colours to my Inke impart.

The

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III.

The Morning rose, resolving to bewaile
 The Sons of *Israel* with doleful tears ;
 The Scarlet colour of the Rose grew pale,
 And Bloud the Violet, and Lilly wears :
 Day hid it self under Nights horrid veile,
 Circled with Ominous Lamps, that scatter'd fears ;
 The Sun a sad, and dismal Face put on,
 From his first Rising till his Course was done.

IV.

Fly Mothers ! fly ! and your sweet Pledges bear
 In your soft Arms to safer shelter, fly ;
 See, how a thousand Murtherers, to their,
 And your destruction arm'd, streight hither hy ;
 See ! their drawn Swords ! See how they cut the Air !
 I hear most dreadful plaints, I hear their cry ;
 Oh fly ! I now your chearful looks discern
 Into dire horrors, and sad mourning turn.

V.

In midst of *Bethlem* was a stately Frame,
 Rais'd on an hundred Columns large, and high ;
 Built like a Spherick Temple, and of name
 For Rooms within, of vast capacity
 The *Cananean* Kings ('tis said by Fame)
 Made it (of old) their Court, and there did lie.
 The work of that great King, who this the Queen
 Of Cities made, and chief of *Palestine*.

VI.

The cruel Tyrant, in the open air,
 Would not survey the bloody Tragedy,
 But to a fitter Theatre repair,
 And so ascends a stately Gallery ;

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At full view, in an high Balcone, there
The dreadful Execution he could see ;
And all their several Forms of Death, a bold
Spectator, and Delighted Judge behold.

VII.

He thought, perhaps, that so, conceal'd, he might
Hide from the eye of Heav'n, his black Design :
But all he did was open to your sight,
Ye Angels ! Troops of Pity, most Divine !
You saw their bleeding wounds, in dismal plight,
And with your hands to wipe them did incline,
That so you might, from what they, cruel, shed,
Enrich your whitest Robes with purest Red.

VIII.

Thither, so soon as Day began to rise,
The Cited came, and, as enclos'd within
A Camp, unnumbered several Companies
Of Matrons, and of Mothers there were seen ;
No sooner entred, but, before their eyes
Appear'd a strange Parade of Arms, and Men.
With doubts, and wonder they suspended were
A while, but soon surpriz'd with sudden fear.

IX.

Hither th' obedient Bands of Mothers brought
Their Sons in Troops, and numbers infinite,
Scarce any one of which was ever taught
To speak, or go, their Parents to delight ;
These understood no Form t' express a Thought ;
Whether they cry'd, or spoke few judg'd aright :
And those, as they with doubtful steps came on,
Ready to fall, and staggering they bemoan.

Now

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X.

Now when with Murderers, on every side,
Enclos'd, themselves th' unhappy Mothers found;
Deluded in their thoughts they dumb abide,
And pale, like Flow'rs new trampled on the ground.
When them thus languishing the children spi'd,
Frighted, and trembling, shrieks and cries abound;
This to the Bosome flies, that to the Teat,
Those under veils and garments seek retreat.

XI.

Mean while fate *Herod* on his lofty Throne
His head with Gems enrich'd, and's back, and breast;
With these a shining Cuirass he put on,
And over all a Royal Purple Vest;
But most pleas'd with the Childrens doleful moan;
That horror suited with his Fancy best.
He in the Sword, and blood delighted more,
Than in the Gold, and Purple that he wore.

XII.

As when a Bird of Prey, that watching sits
On some high Tree a Flock of Pigeons spies;
He fits his Arms, his Bill, and Pounces whets,
Still keeping them in view with greedy eyes:
So his stern look he turns, with fatal threats,
On the pale Mothers, and the Infants cries;
Then to his Officer, from his high stand,
To sound the Trumpet nods his last command.

XIII.

He from his back, in hand, his Trumpet takes,
Puts to his lips, and, ere he did begin,
Of all his Spirits strong collection makes,
And to his Jaws, and Mouth sends from within,

His

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His cheeks now rise, now fall, the blast streight breaks
Into the air, as it had thunder been ;

The mighty noise strikes through the marble skies,
And busie Eccho to each note replies.

XIV.

The Signal thus dispers'd of what they fear'd ;
A thousand hands a thousand Arms extend ;
Over a thousand heads the Swords appear'd,
And streams of blood from thousand wounds descend ;
The Womens shrieks through all the Court are heard,
And th' air the doleful cries of Infants rend.

Dire Fury here, there Death offends the eye,
The Murderers rage, the Murder'd groan and die.

XV.

How many there expir'd their last of breath,
Who their first Breathings newly had begun ?
How many were surpriz'd by sudden death
Who what it was to live had hardly known ?
How many first beheld the shades beneath,
E're the worlds pleasing Light had on them shone ?
And from how many the Impartial knife
Cut off (soon as begun) the Thread of Life ?

XVI.

Sad to behold ! how through the bloody Court
The frighted Mothers with their Children fly ;
The ample *Cupulos*, where they resort,
Tremble with the dire horrors of their cry ;
Statues, and Pillars (if Fame truth report)
Continued streams of blood so mollifie,
That they were seen to weep, and trembling show
Their Pity at the sound of every blow.

And

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XVII.

And 'twas a Miracle (if Fame say true)
That many, quite of sense, and life depriv'd,
Their faces from the murdering Sword withdrew,
Perhaps by late excess of fear reviv'd.
The streams of blood began to flow anew,
With tears of Mothers as from thence deriv'd :
Whence ev'n the Blood look'd pale, and did appear
To fly from the Impression of their fear.

XVIII.

The clattering of the Swords the Palace shook ;
Infamous Palace, and most guilty Pile !
The Roof stood firm, that the Sun might not look
Into the Place, and blood his Rays defile ;
But how couldst thou (O Son) in pity brook
Thy usual way, if thou didst grieve the while ?
Why didst thou not, at least, thy Lustre keep
Conceal'd, if thou couldst neither sigh, nor weep ?

XIX.

Their Swords, which heretofore were clean, and bright,
(From far their Rays accusom'd to reflect)
Now cleave the Air with a most horrid Light,
And with the stains of blood their beams infect.
Herod their groans with greedy appetite
Attends, and seems their slaughter to direct.
And, as a glad Spectator, in the Scenes,
Is pleas'd to see their tortures, and their pains.

XX.

Not more the Miser, with his heaps of Gold,
Can satishe his Avaricious mind
Than *Herod* while their Swords he did behold
Destroying Innocents, content did find ;

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No less their groans (while they grew pale, and cold)
His cruel thoughts to all delight inclin'd ;
Then Songs of Nymphs, and Lays of Birds, in Spring,
'Mong flow'rs, and groves, to others pleasure bring.

XXI.

A Lady, whom Love prodigally, there,
With Graces had enrich'd was heard apart
To bargain with an Officer, her hair
Dishevel'd, wringing her hands, and to divert
His rage, strike me (said she) this Infant spare !
He's the best portion of my Soul, and Heart.
The Villain promis'd, as he promis'd smil'd,
But broke 't, and 'fore her face freight kill'd the child.

XXII.

The Murderer triumphs over him he wounds ;
Nor can forbear to threaten as he dies, (drowns
This groans, and weeps, when he his Sword freight
Within his throat, and stops both groans, and cries,
Forc'd from his Mothers Arms, whom fear confounds,
And rage affrights, here one his hands applies
To his most cruel Neck, and, while he lives,
For wounds to him, who kills him, kisses gives.

XXIII.

So, when as yet scarce wean'd, her Yearling slain,
And bleeding by some Butcher's hand she spies,
The frighted Cow runs mad through all the Plain,
And with loud bellowing strikes the Very Skies ;
Or as, her Nest robb'd by some greedy Swain,
(Who for such prey through groves or thickets pries,)
The loss of her dear Young the Nightingale
Is wont with mournful accents to bewaile.

Such

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XXIV.

Such she appears, and such the wounds, and pains
Of her sharp grief, nor is she less distress'd :
On her faln Son she falls, her hands enchains
In his ; joyns face to face, and breast to breast ;
The piteous humour melts her heart and rains
Into his wounds, which are, by that oppress'd :
He bleeds, she weeps, and her sad flux of tears,
A due proportion with his bleeding bears.

XXV.

On th' other side (barbarity most wild !)
A Mother, and a Murderer contest ;
She would still keep, He force away the Child :
One pull'd the feet, t' other the arms possess'd ;
With Pity one, t' other with Fury boil'd ;
This rants and bauls, t' other her groans express'd :
And all the Trophies from this conflict borne,
Were, that the Infant was in pieces torne.

XXVI.

Why, why (said she, as sadly she complains)
Him born of me, do you from me divide ?
Him, whom I've nurtur'd with such care, and pains :
And will you murder him ? damn'd Homicide !
He is a Work of Nature, which contains
The dearest part of me, whom you deride ;
That I should him, whom I have borne within
My womb, 's perhaps your pique, or else my sin.

XXVII.

At least with this dear Branch (nor leave me so
Alone) with this, me, me (the Mother) kill ;
My blood, than his, doth much more largely flow :
Quench your fierce rage in it, and fate your will :

The Slaughter of the Innocents. 79

Let Us, at least, in death together go ;
This by the cruel'st may be granted still.
His faults are mine, if he have err'd, so I,
'Tis mercy, if we may together dy.

XXVIII.

What seek'st thou Tyrant ? if a guilty Foe,
Why hurt'st thou Him who ne're did thee offend ?
But thou (O Lord !) why why art thou so slow ?
When wilt thou thy most dreadful arm extend ?
O blest Redeemer, promis'd long ago !
Thy thunder dart, and now, O now descend !
Let this fierce Monster see thy wrath, and fear,
Who sheds our blood so prodigally here.

XXIX.

Robb'd of all comfort, while she thus complains,
The ill-defended Cause of all her woes,
In pieces falls, part in her hand remains,
So that, more cruel she, then pious shows.
He, who shape, onely, of a Man retains,
Sings, o're the Corps, and as in triumph goes,
Nor feels remorse, but that so great a rage
As his, those little limbs could ne're assuage.

XXX.

At this surprize of mischief all the rest,
Like Statues fix'd, their strange amazement shew ;
Each minute the vile treachery exprest,
In dire effects, and yet no cause they knew.
Fear for themselves, as for their sons each brest
Invades, and yet, at once, they fearless grew.
For every one esteem'd her torments mild,
If, as she dy'd, she might embrace her child.

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XXXI.

One 'mong the rest, whose grief had given some pause
To rage, and heat, through all their weapons ran ;
And gives this language,---Proud King ! for what cause
Is this to us, thy Loyal subjects done ?

But hopes to see revenge, Me now withdraws
From death, if Heaven our just complaints will owne ;
Or if the Thunderer, who rules the Sky,
Upon the wrongs of Mortals casts his eye.

XXXII.

A Lady young, and elegantly Faire,
Leading a Child, then, lately taught to move
His trembling steps ; She, of the lovely paire,
Like *Venus* seem'd ; He like the God of Love.
But suddenly he neither did appear
The God-like Boy, nor She the Goddess prove ;
While the fierce Messenger of Death him bears
Away, and left Her overwhelm'd in tears.

XXXIII.

A Coat of finest Maile, this Murderer wore
In form, a Cuirace ; naked all the rest ;
His head a Cap of rusty Iron bore,
His hand an axe, which he with rage, addrest,
Against the wretched throng, where none before
Him stood, but gave large way whereere he prest,
Like a wild *Boare*, that, as he grunting goes,
His bristles rears, and his sharp Tusshes shows.

XXXIV.

Unhappy she laments, but he le not hear,
And snatches, from her hand, her dearest part ;
The pupil Orphan (then her eyes more dear)
Eye of her soul, and the soul of her heart.

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With steps uncertain staggering here and there,
Him certain errors to new paths divert,
Until the Murderer with a sad surprize
Cut off, at once, his Life, and doleful cries.

XXXV.

Wide was the wound, by which through every vein,
(Not yet well knit) the bloud in Rivulers flows;
From the sweet Inn, that did it entertain,
The new-born Soul, as from a prison, goes.
Nor yet in those small limbs did place remain,
To give another wound; the Dagger shows
Much greater then the Trunk it wounds, the blade
Much broader then the Orifice it made.

XXXVI.

The Mother seiz'd, and hugg'd him to her brest,
The weight, once easy, then too heavy grew;
Tears from her heart his spirits, by cold possesst,
Seek to revive, and his pale Face bedew;
His looks, and likeness she so just exprest,
That the dead infant she appeares, in view.
Scarce could she be distinguish'd while she kept,
This measure in her grief, but that she wept.

XXXVII.

One'mong the rest, expos'd her naked side,
With snowy breasts, and a most beauteous Face;
Her self a shield she made, her child to hide,
And keep him safe from death, in her embrace.
But in her Golden Locks the Homicide
His arme entwists, to force her from the place:
And all the glories of her shining head
Torne off, are, broken, on the pavement spread.

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XXXVIII.

Yet she, as close as Ivy to the Tree,
To her dear pledge of Love still, firmly, clings;
Till him by th' foot, her by her tresses, he
(Most cruel) forc'd, and to subjection brings.
Then with a furious hand immediately,
The child against a neighbouring wall he flings.
But first, him, twice or thrice about his head
He swong, and with more violence struck him dead.

XXXIX.

At this so dreadful spectacle, so wild
A rage, fear did so far the Fact out-go,
That the still trembling, and affrighted child
Appear'd as dead, before he felt the blow.
At last his limbs all broke, his bones all spoil'd,
As bleeding Trophies all the ground bestrow;
While through his mouth, and nostrils, like a floud,
The brains gush'd out. & marrow mix'd with blood.

XL.

The cruel villain, not yet satisfi'd,
With his proud feet the mangled carcase spurns,
Her heart with pitty melting (when she spy'd
Her hopes destroy'd) to the Almighty turns.
It cannot be a wonder now (she cry'd)
That in the breasts of men such fury burns,
Nor that such wrongs, and murders they procure,
But that thou (King of Heaven!) should'st them endure.

XLI.

Near these was one of countenance most stern,
Rude in his Habit, dreadful in his Deeds;
In him they nothing Humane could discern,
No Bear so fierce the *Lucane* Mountain breeds.

The Slaughter of the Innocents. 83

Bloud in his hands, his eyes with fury burn,
His dreadful drefs, his actions much exceeds:

A heavy Hedg-bill, in his hand he bore,
With which he lopt off limbs, as boughs before.

XLII.

He to a miserable *Hebrew* there,
Who suck'd the spirits of Life from's Mother's brest,
Insaling turns, and cryes, i'll quickly tare
Thee from that bosom where thou'rt so carefst.
I will unbowel thee, and thee declare,
Son of her bowels, and belov'd the best.

This said, H'assailes her, but th' undaunted dame
Opposing him, did more his rage enflame.

XLIII.

Alas! what can a woman's weakness do,
'Gainst the arm'd Fury of a cruel hand?
Fear for her dearest Infant made her slow;
Love drew her back and put her to a stand.
While thus, in doubt, she could no farther go
Betwixt her own, and his defence restrain'd,
Behold! at once, a blow that mortal prov'd,
Her from her doubts, and him from life remov'd.

XLIV.

The Villain with one death unsatisfy'd,
Murder's the Son, and, at that instant too,
Through the same wound piercing her tender side,
With a new kind of death the Mother slew.
Her trembling heart within he opens wide,
Where yet maternal Love, was quick, in view.
So that now twice her dear delight was slain,
First in her arms, then in her brest again.

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XLV.

'Gainst one, who, sadly weeping, begg'd relief,
A Souldier cruel as an Aspe, or Bear,
To rob her of her Son, and him of life,
Had rais'd his arm when she in his careere
Of fury stop'd him, and, grown bold with grief,
Did both her teeth, and nales, like mad prepare.
The sword then turn'd against her, she withstands,
And bravely wrests it from his murdring hands.

XLVI.

Then to her self, It must not be (she said)
That thou my Son (these bowels onely paine !)
It must not be, that thou the spoile be made
Of that fell heart, and in vile hands remain:
No ; I, who first to thee thy milk convey'd,
By this dire Act will take thy blood again,
And me these salvage Troops hereafter shall,
A better Murdres, then a Mother call.

XLVII.

As thus she spake the new *Medea* streight
Transfix'd, and kills him, and in two divides ;
And the loved pieces (held so dear of late)
Throws at the Villain's face, who her derides.
Thus from an *Hebrew* Mother learn to fate
Thy rage, on thine own children, and besides,
In cruel blows (said she) to be more skill'd,
From this right hand ; with that herself she kill'd.

XLVIII

Two more there were; this thought herself late blest
With one sole Son ; that in a lovely paire :
They both in silence had their grief suppress'd,
And up to Heaven their weeping stars did rear.

The Slaughter of the Innocents. 85

Till towards her, who the sole Son possesst,
And in her bosome hugg'd (then full of fear)
A Jew half-naked, bare-foot, and his arm
All bloody, swiftly brought the sad alarm.

XLIX.

A Sleeveless Coat of purple dye he wore,
All torne, and scarce did to his knees descend ;
Red, and as stiff as bristles of a Boar,
Two long Mustachoes from his chin descend.
Gaping his mouth, his thick lips foaming o're,
His squinting eyes, rough hairy eyebrows bend.
His crooked nose, the Vultur's beak exprest,
In brief, he was a Man, but seem'd a beast.

L.

The beauteous woman (as if stupify'd)
All suffer'd, and gave neither sigh, nor groan,
But even in pitty, with his rage comply'd,
And freely to the Russian gave her Son.
Who if he had not turn'd his eyes aside,
If with her veile she had not hid her own,
At her sweet looks the sword had fallen from
His murdering hand, and she had overcome.

LI.

But what can Beauty against Fury do ?
His naked sword streight pierc'd the Infant's breast ;
Who on th' Assassin, as he struck him through,
Smiles, and cries Pappa, as by him caress'd.
Then wantonly his hand extended to
The weapon, that was through his body prest,
Thinking the blade was silver, and a gift
To play with, which, him then of life bereft.

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LII.

He saw not, nor regarded him, at all,
But where his smiles came forth his weapon drown'd;
Yet when he saw the murder'd Infants spraul,
And sadly languish, dying on the ground,
He like the *Crocodile* laments his fall,
And wept for him to whom he gave the wound.
But all his tears, and sorrow soon were gone,
And pitty by his cruelty o'rethrowne.

LIII.

Then to the other turn'd, irresolute
On which of her two Sons he first should fall;
What should she wretched do? who durst dispute
Her cause? on whom should she for succour call?
She flies, he follows, and in the pursuit,
Like a fierce *Massif* hunts her over all.
On every side she labours to evade,
But like a *Lamb* is to the *Wolf* betray'd.

LIV.

With the same Love, when *Troy* was overthrown,
Aeneas from his Native Country fled;
On's back his Father, in his hand his Son,
To safety from th' insulting flames he led:
So she, their refuge and Defence alone
To save them from the Villain (full of Dread)
Now here, now there, with her beloved Sons,
Hugg'd in her arms (a pleasing burthen) runs.

LV.

What should she do? She from one danger runs,
And streight into another mischief flies;
As when the Dog the frighted Partridge shuns,
And in a moment by the *Falcon* dyes.

Another

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Another 'gainst the eldest of her Sons,
Then sucking at her brest) a dart employes
That through his cheeks, into her bosom goes,
Which late with milk, but now with bloud o'reflows.

LVI.

But her soon joind the Barbarous Homicide.
With stronger Arms, and threatnings terrifies;
The other child in her embrace he spy'd,
(Weak sassy !) and thus proudly scoffing cries :
There is no reason I should thee divide
From him, whom Love to thee so strictly tyes.
And since we may not such dear knots unty,
'Tis fit he nail'd should in thy bosom dy.

LVII.

The silly wretch, like an affrighted Deer,
That to some shady Covert swift retires,
Between those Mounts of Snow, that chosen were
By Love, to keep his Seeds of liveliest fires,
Then under either brest, possess'd with fear,
From th' flaming sword to hide his face desires ;
And so much sense, and wit retain'd, to fly,
From rage, and understand what 'twas to dy.

LVIII.

But all in vain ; the horrid Villain bends
The point towards him, and, erring gives a wound ;
A cruel error ! more cruel where it ends,
Which both transfix'd, and threw them to the ground.
He both his arms, in falling, wide extends,
She under, him in her embraces bound.
And while at once, her voice and motion fade,
To her Son Crucify'd, the Cross she's made.

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LIX.

One (*Arpin*) by thy Pensil so renown'd,
With painted Charity might well compare ;
Where the sweet children in her armes are bound,
And in her bosom all her Bounty share.

(Such seem'd the Lady fallen on the ground)
Barefoot, undress'd with her dishevel'd hair ;
And above her, tender, and full of Grace,
Shin'd five most lovely branches of her race.

LX.

For though The King's Ediſt did onely cite,
Mothers with sucking Infants to appear ;
Yet some of riper Age, with great delight,
To th' fatal Court by her conducted were :
So, that fraternal Love did them invite
To entertain themselves, and prattle there.

And wheresoe're she fate her feet, or mov'd,
To keep them in her view she always lov'd.

LXI.

The first a Scholar was, but very Young,
Nor could the notes of his small Tablet tell ;
Beginning then to learn the *Hebrew* tongue,
Nor could the scatter'd lines distinguish well.
When see ! his head was with a blow, so strong
Cut off, it streight into his bosom fell,
And on the guiltless Book, as there he stood,
Writ his last Fate, in Characters of Bloud.

LXII.

This head thus sever'd from the body, streight
The Villain to another runs, in hast,
Who on an apple (most unfortunate)
Then fed, an apple of the bitter'tt tast !

The Slaughter of the Innocents. 89

Quite through his throat (as he the pleasing bait
Took in) the guilty steel the Murderer past;
And with one cruel blow, his vital breath
Cut off, he swallow'd, with the sword, his death.

LXIII.

The third there, wantonly, leap'd to and fro,
Upon a fancied Palfry made of Cane;
Poor wretch! he knew not by what sudden blow,
Of a most cruel Fate, he should be slain.
When see! that Hand, that did no pitty know;
Stabb'd him, and forc'd his careere restrain:
He struck him down, and left him on the place
To tilt with death, then past with smiles in s face.

LXIV.

The beauteous reliques of this lovely frame,
The fourth, and fifth, among the rest, were there;
Their grieving Mother's copy (but that name
Must cease hereafter) two fair twins they were.
One ('mong the Troops) pursued his little game,
(Whipping his Top) where streams of bloud appears;
And wholly on his childish sport intent,
Thought not at all of the most sad event.

LXV.

'Gainst him the cruel Homicide streight bent
His hand, and weapon, and comes on amain;
But it succeeded not to his intent,
Although the mortal wound was not in vain.
While interpos'd, by chance, the other went,
Near to his Brother, and was sudden, slain.
Not Me (said he) but thine own folly blame,
Which thus t' anticipate thy ruin came.

Then

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LXVI.

Then the Survivor of the Five, to hide
Under her Robe the weeping Mother steals ;
But he his own escape could not abide,
But, puiling, that detects which she conceals.
She all the means to keep him under try'd,
While (childish) he the Pious fraud reveals.
Poor fool ! alas ! He could not silent there
Continue, 'cause he had not learn'd to fear.

LXVII.

She most unhappy, and ill-counsell'd too,
(To whom Love, sense, and Life did grief impart)
Dismaid, and pale (as death) no better knew
Then, sadly, through her eyes to pour her heart.
But the Cry still grew loud, as if to shew
Whither the sword, and fury should divert :
The voice he follows, and (the fatal sound
Discover'd) trace'd the way to give the wound.

LXVIII.

As 'gainst the greedy, and rapacious Kite,
The fearful Hen strives to defend her Brood ;
So she, against the Murderer, the fight
Awhile maintain'd, but all could do no good.
For he, who did in cruelty delight,
Cut with the sword his throat, then all in blood,
Most horribly involv'd the Infant lyes
Among his brothers carcases, and dyes.

LXIX.

As when, o'rewhelm'd in tears, the *Theban* Queen
Beheld the Arrows swiftly fall from Heaven,
Whence in one Day th *Delian* Powers had been
Reveng'd, and took away seven lives, and seven.

The Slaughter of the Innocents.

91

At length, when the last fatal shaft was seen
To fall, and the last mortal wound was given;
At the sad sight amaz'd, and weary grown
Of Life, she fix'd, and turn'd into a stone.

LXX.

Such the poor woman, while she yet surviv'd,
Stood stupify'd among her children slain
Of warmth, of Colour, and of Sense depriv'd,
Nothing of motion, Soul, or Life remain.
You could not say She's dead, or that She liv'd,
A Statue of white Marble, free from stain,
All purely white, but when her Sons, who bled
So near, had stain'd her snowy limbs with Red.

LXXI.

At length the cruel mixture o're, and o're
She turns (such vigour Pity then supply'd)
On all sides the loved reliques to explore,
Which there the various forms of slaughter hide.
The mangled members all besmear'd with gore,
(Love to her hand in this sad work was guid)
She quickly recollects, together layes,
And of last exequies the Honour payes.

LXXII.

With tears she bathes them, and doth thus complain,
Wretch that I am! are these dear pledges mine?
Whose dismal sight pierceeth my Heart again,
Prompts me to incorporate, and with them join.
Here nothing, but most horrid heaps remain,
Of Fragments rais'd by rage, and curs'd design;
Nothing but bloody Piles, and limbs, that are
Lopp'd off, and scatter'd, as in fields of War.

I late

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LXXIII.

I late was wont (and 'twas not long ago)
For you (poor children) filken threads to spin,
Or Coats of linnen upon you bestow,
Which, with my own hand, I did first begin.
But now how infamous my labours show !
Where the sword's cruel marks, are onely seen,
Made by a murdering hand, these ruins are,
(Though from another) left to my repaire.

LXXIV.

Are these (alas !) those lovely limbs ! those gay !
Which from your mother you did first assume ?
O Stars ! that me to ruin did betray !
Is such my miserable Flesh become ?
'Mong all these wounds, and bloud, these, these are they,
These belov'd Heads I know, is't then your doome,
That I should (while to me you thus return)
For the sad reliques of my bowels mourn ?

LXXV.

Oh sweetest Faces ! mirrours of my Heart !
Where I my self was wont to recreate;
Sons of these eyes ! (eyes that with sorrow smart)
In which I tasted all delights of late.
O Lips ! where Love with kisses would divert,
And intermingled smiles himself would fate.
Alas, what Hellish monsters now combine,
Thus cruelly to mix your bloud with mine.

LXXVI.

Let me these limbs distinctly touch, at least,
Though with my touch (I fear) they'll break again ;
Wretch ! I my sons thus fatally deceas't
Lament, yet know not, for which I complain !

The Slaughter of the Innocents. 93

For while with this dire paleness y^r are possess'd,
Must distracted, and confus'd remain;
And all the beauty, that I once might boast,
In this your want of blood, I see is lost.

LXXVII.

Art thou my First-born? sure it cannot be;
This Head so late cut off, cannot be thine;
Dire change! to this thy Body, who was He,
Who could another Face so unlike join.
Dear children, now no hopes remain for Me,
All joyes, I, in your eyes to Death resign.
Here my griefs swell, yet can't I more bewail,
Your Fate with tears whose springs are dry, and fail.

LXXVIII.

She faints, her looks all pale no voice, or sound
Of words, but breathless, and unmov'd her eyes;
While a black storm, of thousands swords the ground
Shakes all around, and through all quarters flies.
Where such Stars reign, and such a King is found,
They fix a curse on all Nativities.
Happy, who was unborn; or if then born,
Who from his Birth, nere saw a second morn.

LXXIX.

But what afflicts thee? why dost thou complain,
(Vile World) that th' Age is rude, or bad the Times?
That Fraud now flourishes, and Vices reign?
That Faith, and Truth inhabit not thy climes?
Virtue, brave Minds, and noble Souls, in vain
Languish, and grieve to see the growth of Crimes;
Since clearest Innocence could perish so,
And from that Day lyes murder'd, here, below.

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LXXX.

Rivers of blood now flow ; nothing is heard
But doleful mourning, shouts of rage, and ire,
Horror, and Death, *Herod* alone appear'd
with pleasure the sad Objects to admire.

The Slaughter feasts him ; and (which others fear'd)
He prais'd the wounds, that kept his joyes entire.

With greedy appetite he reckons all

The blows, and still observes them, as they fall.

LXXXI.

Mean while the People full of grief, and sad,
With lamentable Cryes their Fate bemoan,
Trembling with memory of what they had
Beheld, the King fix'd in his joyes alone,

(As the Sun s warmth makes poisonous Serpents mad)
Seem's through their Pitty to all ill more prone :

Biting his Lips, he foames ; his eyes with flame

Are fill'd, and gnashing Teeth his rage proclaime.

LXXXII.

Now from the place he rose from whence before,
Th' effects of his dire Fury he had seen ;

Then nearer went, resolving to explore

The Shambles of Tyranny, and therein

Sees corps dispers'd (like wracks upon the Shore)

Wracks of Mortality, that there had been

Late drown'd, in childrens blood, whose horrid

Their Swathbands, and their Members seem'd to hide

LXXXIII.

Over these dismal Piles, these bloody Heaps,
(Dreadful to think on) He, insulting, goes ;

O're gaping sides, and cloven heads he leaps

Whence of warm blood a reeking deluge flows

The Slaughter of the Innocents. 95

There as in streams, clear, flowing in their Deep,
Himself he views, and's inward pleasure shews;
And as the Wretches lay upon the ground,
Measures with his own hand each fatal wound.

LXXXIV.

So a fierce Dragon from his Den, with green
And shining wings, and Scarlet Crest ascends,
To view the Sun, by him before not seen,
And then his wide and dreadful Jaws extends;
Erects his Scales, that shine, as they had been
With rough, and squallid Gold enlay'd, then bends
His rage against the Light of Heav'n and throws
Poyson from's trident-tongue where e're he goes.

LXXXV.

Some cover'd o're with ugly stains he there
Beheld lie languishing with deadly pain:
And in their Mothers arms uncertain are
Whether in death or life they yet remain.
Others expose their hearts that open were,
And quite depriv'd of life; then shew again
Their Faces shap'd for pity, and for love;
But objects now of grief and sorrow prove.

LXXXVI.

Others whose vital Humour was not spent,
And from their panting hearts yet largely flows
While blood by Vomit from their Mouths is sent,
(As when a sinking Bark near harbour rows)
Some one by swimming, would his Fate prevent,
And himself on some swelling billow throws;
But spent, and breathless in this last effort,
Sinks in his Mothers arms, and dies i'th' Port.

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LXXXVII.

But the sad Women some their tender cheeks
 Beat with their hands, their lovely tresses tare ;
 Here one her naked bosome, Frantick, strikes,
 Sighs not, nor groans, but howling rends the air :
 Another's breast, with lamentable skreeks,
 (Like *Ætna*) fumes ; her eyes like *Ganges* are ;
 Some 'gainst the King, some against Heav'n exclaim,
 And some their griefs, that had not kill'd them, blame.

LXXXVIII.

There one, to give her griefs a silent vent,
 Near to her Son, late murder'd, prostrate lies:
 Quite stupid in the Act ; her self she spent
 In groans, and with deep sighs her self destroys :
 Another checks her sorrow, as content
 To give her scarce-dead Sons their Obsequies ;
 And gath'ring on their Lips their fleeting breath,
 Stamps there departing kisses, cold as Death.

LXXXIX.

The squalid, dismal spoils, and torn Remains
 Of a pale little Corps ; another there,
 Within a covering, cleans'd from bloody stains,
 An object of extremest Pity bare ;
 And while her heart to water, through her veins
 Distils, and while her soul dissolves to air,
 Her Bosome, late his Cradle, is become
 By her so strict Embrace, in Death his Tomb.

XC.

Tyr'd with this sight, not satisf'd with blood,
Herod would now his greedy eyes divert
 On the soft Torrent, and Vermilion flood,
 And in that tepid Bath carefs'd his heart ;

The Slaughter of the Innocents: 97

Of late, like troubled streams; but now, they stood
Like settled Pools, and calm in every part,
Only a Gale of sighs, as they the world
Forsook, with circles had the Surface curl'd.

Notes upon the Third Book.

Stanza I.

This Painter so commended by our Author was Gioseppe Cesari d' Arpino, cotemporary with Marino, a Favorite to three successive Popes; for his excellent Pieces, and for a Piece of St. Michael, presented to Lewis the 13th. the French King, beside other considerable gratuities, had the Order of St. Michael conferred upon him.

Stanza V.

Bethlehem was called the City of David, where his Ancestors dwelt from the time of Obed, of whom Jesse was lineally descended. It was not the least of the Tribe of Judah, yet we no where find it celebrated for any magnificent or stately building which the Poet here describes, till the Birth of our Saviour gave it reputation. and after his death stor'd it with many stately Edifices of Devotion, through the Piety of several Princes, as Constantine the Great, his Mother Helena, &c.

The End of the Third Book.

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THE SLAUGHTER OF THE INNOCENTS.

BOOK IV.

Limbus.

I.

Surcharg'd with storms, such as were never known,
The dismal day, a dismal night succeeds,
As if it had intended to bemoan
The Infants Exequies in saddest weeds :
The rain in Cataracts was poured down,
With all the horrors that thick darkness breeds:
And from this mute Confusion every where,
Her sighs high winds, her groans loud Thunder were.

II.

Thus, as content, though not content within,
The King into his Palace goes again,
And, in that Furnace, where they did begin,
The furious flames doth still alive retain ;
And 'gainst the Children his accurs'd design
Keeps fresh within his heart, and every vein,
Fearing that in some houses unreveal'd
The Reliques of his Fear might be conceal'd.

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III.

He calls *Malacbe*, such a villain none
E'r knew, of all Mankind the damnd'st Knave;
More cruel, then the cruell'st Lestrigon,
Should all that curst Race rise from the Grave;
Born amongst Thieves, a Jebusite, and grown
Up, 'mong wild beasts, which him their Nature gave;
So very ugly, that if Likeness might
Assume a Body, 'twould himself affright.

IV.

Besides his thin-hair'd Chin, and his bald Head,
His narrow Temples, and thick bristled Brow,
Three Teeth, a Nose that on his Face was spread;
A piercing look his eyes unequal throw,
The best of which by chance had perished;
O're which athwart, an ample scarr did grow;
The stamp, and Character of Jew, and Greek,
In's Forehead, and his Face, as Trophies stick.

V.

Go seek (said he) through all, and with thee take
A Guard, and if (in any place) you find
Children alive, a final slaughter make;
Do, as thou'rt wont, and follow thine own mind.
I le do't (reply'd the Villain) for thy sake,
I scorn their loss, and ne'r think Heav'n unkind;
For this sole cause, that you would have it done,
To shew my obedience, I'll first kill my Son.

VI.

While *Herod* thus within himself design'd
A lasting Monument of his Rage to raise,
Malacbe no less impiously inclin'd,
His Orders for the Fact no more delays;

The Slaughter of the Innocents. 101

A strict observer of his Masters mind
To act their parts his Souldiers he conveys :
No Servant to so merciless a Lord
So void of Pity could the world afford.

VII.

As when, the burning Heats of Summer past,
The fair *Astrea* balances the year,
And *Sol* more temperate rays, and just doth cast,
The days are mild, and Trees ripe Apples bear;
To prey upon their Fruit the Sterlings haste,
And marshall'd in their several Troops appear;
And while far off they hover in the air,
The frighted Peasants for their grapes despair.

VIII.

So this perfidious, and guilty Crew,
Where any Branches of the Hebrew stock,
They heard were hid, the bloody tract pursue,
Leaving the slain, and to fresh slaughter flock;
As in th' *Egean*, when South winds renew
The War, the Palaces, and every rock,
Eccho with noise: so, sad and doleful cries
Of Women, and of Children strike the Skies.

IX.

As if they, now, their Walls, and lofty Gates
Surpriz'd beheld, and sinking all in flames;
While the proud Foe, the Houses scales, elates
His Voice, and blood, and death aloud proclaims;
Her breast afflicted *Bethlem* penetrates
With strokes, and her dire Fate lamenting blames.
And with so loud a voice to God she cries,
That *Rama's* Hill to the sad sound replies.

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X.

As trembling stems of Corn the Sickle reaps,
Or heavy ploughs tear up the tender flow'rs,
Innumerable Children so in heaps
Fall near their Mothers side. The Sword devours
All that it finds; through all, insulting, leaps,
And, in full streams the bloud of Natives pours,
The miserable People cannot fly
Their rage, and know no Refuge, but to die.

XI.

Into a little Cottage, 'mong the rest,
The barbarous *Malecche* broke his way,
Where two sweet Boys he finds, one at the breast
Of's Mother, at her feet the other lay:
This with her foot she rock'd, and lightly prest,
And would with pleasant Songs to sleep betray:
The other from white Springs suck'd milk, and sound
More than the milk, kind kisses to abound.

XII.

Instead of a Salute, the Traitor leapt
To seize the Infant, in the Cradle laid;
And with a dreadful voice, as there he slept,
Awak'd him, and most terribly dismay'd;
Nor long his murd'ring sword from's throat he kept,
But to a lasting Lethargy betray'd;
And made him find (alas!) how very near,
The confines betwixt Death and Sleep appear.

XIII.

Soon as this Trial on the first was found,
The Sword, 'gainst t'other sucking, was employ'd
And in the Nape of's neck inflicts a wound,
Which through his Jaws straight sent a purple tyde,

And

The Slaughter of the Innocents.

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And with 't his Food. His little soul is drown'd
In bloud, and milk that flows within beside ;
While still the sharp, and cruel point was press'd
Forward, and fix'd his Tongue unto his breast.

XIV.

The miserable Mother had, of late,
Another Birth conceiv'd within her Womb,
Tow'rd's which the Suckling sunk as if with that
He sought to joyn, and find a living Tomb.
One in her belly, t'other in a strait
Embrace she held, till sharing in their doom
She fell. Strange Fate ! not to be seen again,
Three in one body by one stroke were slain.

XV.

From thence into another house he made
His way, and there a fair young Lady found ;
Where, newly circumciz'd, her Son was laid,
The bloud as yet not stanch'd, but fresh the Wound ;
He lifting up his armed hand, the Blade
I'th' blood which she would wipe away was drown'd,
And to the Wound was given by Heav'ns Edict,
His cruel Arm doth that of death inflict.

XVI.

She, that she might a little life restore,
As he then languish'd, straight the Teat applies,
But he his mothers milk all turns to gore,
And her white bosom with deep purple dies.
His bloud to water then is turn'd, by store
Of tears, which she pours on him from her eyes :
And while her breasts the crimson liquor dash'd,
Her Son's sweet face the candid humour wash'd.

This

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XVII.

This done he left her, and goes, boldly, through
 All rooms, in places most retir'd he pries,
 Searcheth all Cabinets, and with his Crew
 Turns up the Beds, and all that on them lies ;
 At length, within a little Couch (where two
 Fair Twins were laid) the lovely Pair he spies ;
 In Beauty, and in Form so like they were,
 That like the Twins of Heav'n they did appear.

XVIII.

Born so unhappy, and preserv'd so Ill,
 Alike in Form, in Sex they diff'rent are ;
 One Soul two several Bodies seems to fill,
 And in two Hearts a single life they share.
 Nature to make them like us'd all her skill,
 And by simplicity they coupled were ;
 And this new *Janus* made in Two, one bed
 In common shar'd, as they one Aspect had.

XIX.

But that dear Union fierce *Malecche* broke,
 And quite dissolv'd. Oh happy chance (said he)
 That love, which you does now so strictly yoke,
 So sweet in Life, in Death your Tye shall be ;
 Nor would I, 'twixt you, envy now provoke,
 Since Heav'n your likeness made to this Degree ;
 But, as the world you enter'd at your Birth,
 Fair Twins, such Twins you now shall quit the earth.

XX.

His Irresistable, strong hand, upon
 The nearest to him seiz'd (as this he said)
 Thence through a lofty Window threw him down,
 Which light, and air into the room convey'd.

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The other down the stairs was headlong thrown,
By's Foot (the stairs of rocky stone were made)
So that all bruis'd, and broken every stair,
An ample Tribute of his bloud did share.

XXI.

Each of them seem'd with mutual sighs to mourn,
And their own Exequies accompany,
As two fair branches from one Cyon torn ;
She for him languishing, and for her, he ;
So guiltless both, and both so lately born !
By stones they dy'd, as for Adultery ;
For Fate ordain'd they at their birth should have
One womb, one Bed, and at their Death, one Grave.

XXII.

Thence, where he found a poor, and modest Maid,
Who, as a guard, did on two children wait,
The one was, slumbring, in a Cradle laid,
The other in a Bathing Vessel sate ;
This with the Linnen often laughing play'd,
Nought could the others forward moan abate :
Born of two Venters, but one Father : One
A living Mother had, the other none.

XXIII.

Soon as the Assailer, their poor Mother spy'd,
So suddenly within the room arrive,
The Son-in law she quits, her self employ'd
to her own Son, to keep him still alive :
She takes him in her arms, and terrifi'd,
First thought how she might his escape contrive :
But, an Humane, though not maternal Love
To th' other, would not suffer her to move.

With

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XXIV.

With her own Son, tow'rd's him, whom she desir'd
To save, she runs, and (poor Fool!) in her way
Met them, who him whom she had safe retir'd
Out of the water, did to th' Sword betray.
Bald *Barabasse*, and *Malecche* fir'd
With rage, on her kind Folly torments lay,
And, in her sight, to one the Vessel, there,
Is made his Coffin, t'others Bed his Bier.

XXV.

O'recome with this surprizing Message, cold
Seizeth her trembling heart; her looks grow pale,
To th' earth she falls, and what she did behold,
So cruel was, her life and spirits fail.
Some strangled in the bands, that them enfold,
Struggle, and strive for life till Death prevail;
While these in water, milk, and tears, and bloud
Sink, and are suffocated in the floud.

XXVI.

From thence away with like impetuous rage
Into an house of Citizens he broke,
'Mong whom one married in her tender age,
Was newly then freed from the Nuptial Yoke:
Yet some fair branches still her love engage,
Two at one birth from her *Lucina* took,
But now she saw her self, made in one year
Wife, Mother, Widow, and without an Heir.

XXVII.

Of these by th' Neck *Malecche* seizeth two;
Another by the feet: by th' arm the last,
One with his Lance into the fire he threw,
His feet the second lqueez'd to death; then past

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To a third, whom unto a Beam he drew
And hang'd; into a Well, the fourth he chac'd;
By several torments thus they murder'd were
That every Element a Death might share.

XXVIII.

The various spoils (alas !) who can relate
With which death seem'd so rich, so full of pride;
This from the Trunk the head doth separate:
That from the shoulder doth the arm divide.
By strangling this gives the last stroke of Fate:
That with his Sword transfix'd a trembling side;
And amidst rage, 'midst terroure, grief, and thrall,
Fury, with all the Sisters, runs through all,

XXIX.

The armless Trunks a dismal sight afford,
And strangled Bodies that the ground o'respread,
Heads gasping, newly sever'd by the Sword,
Some are wrung off, some trampled on till dead;
Even ruthless Cruelty her self abhorr'd,
While Death in various shapes such Triumphs led,
And yet her Fury was too great to cease,
But ma'ice made the pois'nous gall encrease.

XXX.

The Morn was risen from the Indian Sea,
And by her blushes shew'd th' approaching Sun,
While Heav'n the shades had mix'd with every Ray,
And Day late married to the Night begun.
Hered perplex'd, and troubled with delay,
His heart inflam'd until the deed was done:
He rose, and's Royal Ornaments resum'd,
His Scepter, and his Purple Robes resum'd.

Streight

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XXXI.

Streight through the lofty Palace dismal crys,
Sad houlings, and most loud complaints were heard :
Women, and Men, with all the Extasies
Of grief, and sorrow every where appear'd :
When see ! a Messenger in doleful guise,
Pale in his looks, and all with blood besmear'd,
Came breathless, and while sweat his face bedews,
Bows to the King, and thus relates the news.

XXXII.

I am (Sir) an unworthy Instrument,
Of that dire Massacre, which was, last night,
By your command perform'd : and now am sent
To tell a message neither of delight,
Nor happiness to you ; if each event
I should distinctly, as 'twas done, recite
'Twould be a memorable story, and
(I must speak truth) much done by this my hand.

XXXIII.

Under your Royal Ensigns (as enjoyn'd
By you) most readily we went away,
Under *Malecche's* conduct, all inclin'd
Your Orders to perform, without delay ;
None of us, though a Father, but design'd
To his own loss, your pleasure to obey ;
On then we silent march'd, conceal'd from sight
Of all, by th' shades and horror of the night.

XXXIV.

The Market-place first seiz'd, and both the gates,
All Streets and Avenues blockt up, and barr'd ;
On every side enclos'd, in greatest straits,
Each place so well our faithful Souldiers guard

That

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That no way open Fortune, or the Fates
Could find to make escape, or death retard;
Our Captain gave the word through all, around,
To give the Signal to the Trumpet's sound.

XXXV.

By vertue of your Royal Edict, he
Commands, that all who arms for use could bear,
Their houses, and the City instantly
Should quit, and a strong Guard, without, prepare;
That so the wicked Traytor might not flee
Our search, and none t'assist his flight should dare:
A Traitor, who, there, and inclin'd
To mischief, something 'gainst the King design'd.

XXXVI.

The Citizens all promptly straight compli'd
With your command: none backward to obey,
And in a moment from all streets we spi'd
Children through the dark shades to fly away:
For we believ'd the number less that did
Than those who yet conceal'd in secret lay;
'Twas so, and then a thousand Infants slain,
By several sorts of wounds our Weapons stain.

XXXVII.

Nothing but sighs, deep groans, complaints, and cries
From every place, on every side we hear,
With horreur in all houses, 'fore their eyes
Murder, and Death triumphant now appear:
Here scatter'd Swaths, and broken Limbs arise
In heaps; in blood warm Intrails swimming; there,
Should I what then I did my self conceal
'Twere vain (Sir) since my Acts themselves reveal.

When

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XXXVIII.

When thus in slaughter we the night had spent,
And were upon return, at break of day,
A sad, but unexpected Accident,
(Dire chance unheard of) intercepts our way.
O could your Majesty have been content,
That we had been less ready to obey !

But what do silly People know ? What ill
Can give them blame, that's done against their will.

XXXIX.

Our hands too ready were (alas) too prone
All our desires to satisfie you were.
With bloud, rage, shame our hearts were drunk, and none
Saw what they did ; dark and obscure the air.
The Fault might be excus'd, but it is done ;
This said, his Tongue did farther speech forbear :
But *Herod* urg'd him on, and he again
Began, and thus the King did entertain.

XL.

While we (as I have said) your high command
Had thus perform'd, resolving to be gone,
A cunning Souldier of *Malecche's* Band,
(His Spy who all his secrets knew alone,)
Met us, in haste, to let him understand,
That he a woman saw (to him unknown)
Who, with two Children, in her garment wrap'd,
Fled thence, and to a secret place escap'd.

XLI.

Then not far distant from the Palace, where
From the soft stream the Royal Garden sees
With such delight proud *Libanus* to rear
His head, led on by cruel destinies,

The Slaughter of the Innocents. III

Postern door our Guide approach'd, and there
While he desir'd to act all by surprize)

Through crannies of the broken posts appear'd
A little light, and streight a voice was heard.

XLII.

Within a Woman was, whose looks put on --
All that of fear or sorrow could be found ;
Solicitous for her two Sons, the one
Lay'd in her bosom, t' other on the ground
With sighs, mix'd with a sad, and trembling tone,
Drawn from her heart, where doubtful thoughts abound,
To one (dear Child) where shall I save, or hide
Thee? in th' Abyss of deepest seas (she cry'd.)

XLIII.

Samarita once had Women (as 'tis said
By Fame) so cruel, that with hunger prest ;
Flesh, born of their own bowells, re-conveyd
To them, and so on their own Issue feast.
And may not this, that their Rage lawful made,
To Me, in Pitty be allow'd, at least?
And to conceal you from these Harpies Pride,
My dearest entrails, in my entrails hide.

XLIV.

But after Patterns of such Ills, so great,
I've often op'd my bosom unto thee
(Dear Child) that so thou might'st thy hopes repeat,
After my Death to have a Life from Me.
Nay even my Soul thou mayst lay open yet,
If with my Soul thou mayst concealed be ;
How greedily should I receive thee, here
Within my very Soul, thou Soul more dear.

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XLV.

Thus reas'ning with her self, the child held in
Her arms, within a Vessel deep and wide,
That lately fill'd with *Bacchus* spoils had bin
(Not yet quite empty) silent, seeks to hide.
Then addes, to thee (O Vessel) free from sin
Of fraud, I all my Joy, and Peace confide ;
And let me, 'midst such Ruins, thee, a kind
Depository of my Treasure find.

XLVI.

More she would say, but at her back she hears
Our Captain's rage, and voice, who at the door
Knock'd, and streight in he breaks ; in piece-tears
The locks, and barres, more furious then before.
One hidden in the Caske ; t'other her fears
Snatching into her arms, she flying bore
Into the most remote, and secret room
Of all the house, and waited there her doom.

XLVII.

She hid him there, but might have with him fled
From the dire mischief that was then so near,
Had she had time to leave there, in his steed,
Some other Child, that might like this appear.
But from this fatal Risque she hop'd this Head
First to secure, which she esteem'd most dear ;
Or with a wile so merciless, and strange,
Make one to take the other's sad revenge.

XLVIII.

'Twas wonderful she past thus undescry'd
By Us ; but through the dark, and gloomy aire,
And horrors that appear'd, on every side,
None did consider what she acted there.

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Besides our rage swell'd to so high a Tyde,
That we ran blind, and madding every where;
And since she was not in the Palace seen,
None did suspect this chance could e're ha' been.

XLIX.

But our *Malecche*, who exactly knew
The place, where this dear Theft then hidden lay;
To boast his power, and his fierce rage pursue,
(As he his furious humour would betray)
Still threatning, and in's actions dreadful too,
Would scoffing with her sad misfortune play;
And, with cruel cunning, on her smil'd,
To cloak's intent, before her Sons were kil'd.

L.

And now his hands, then he his feet employ'd
Against her, now tares her Vest, and then her hair;
Tell me (said he) where is it thou didst hide
Thy two Sons; tell me (vile wretch) where they are?
And thou (said she) whose hands with blood are dy'd,
Where are those Babes whom thou hast murder'd? where?
Eyes of so many wretched Mothers! Thou,
While I of thousands speak, seek'st only two.

LI.

Dear Children! who to Me like Stars did show,
Whom I so fondly Nurst up, and carest,
What Nest protects you now? did you but know
What cruel talons snatch you from my breast,
That 'midst these wracks, chains, arms, and dangers, tho'
Torments of quickest flames did me invest.

This Heart (which now no other light can see)
Robb'd of a Mother's faith shall never be.

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LII.

Whither, O whither can you now retire ?
(My hapless Babes !) what fortune can you save ?
You are; perhaps, to Ashes turn'd by fire ;
Or in deep waters now have found a Grave.
Food, or for Dogs, or Birds ! or Winds conspire,
With raging Seas, and you for pastime have.
Or the dire thirst, of barbarous swords, late drench'd
In blood of Innocents, perhaps have quench'd.

LIII.

Quench'd ? alas no ; there's nothing can restrain
This barbarous rage, (I see) it flames so high.
To this *Malceche* says, | Thou dost, in vain,
What cannot be deny'd to Me, deny.
Fond Faith, dull Piety, mad Love to feign
That as a Secret, which must open ly.
The violence of the sword, with quickest force,
Deprives a Mother's heart of all remorse.

LIV.

Art thou the valiant Mother ; thou the wise,
Who wouldst conceal, what is already known ?
Who Life neglectest, and do'st Death despise,
For Love of thy dear children this is done.
Like motions of Love in *Herod* rise,
And him invite too, to preserve his own.
Thus menacing he spoke, and she with brave,
And manly courage this stout answer gave.

LV.

Plant Me, 'mong swords, or hottest flames, if thou
Know'st how to kill ; Death will great kindness be,
If thou desirest to terrify me now,
With Life, and not with Death then threaten me.

Thus

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Thus the brave Woman with a constant brow ;
Her courage greater then before they see ;
When the poor infant, in the Vessel lay'd,
Himself, with childish cryes (alafs !) betray'd.

LVI.

Mlecche seiz'd the Vessel, which upon
The floor he roll'd, and with it laughing play'd ;
But when with pointed steel nought could be done,
And that the poignard small impression made ;
When all the strength and force of's arm was gone,
What might be done by fire he then essay'd ;
To th' flames he drives it, and the hearth was fill'd
With bloud, & wine, through numerous holes distill'd.

LVII.

As when the *Agrigentine* Bull those dire,
And doleful notes sent from the hollow brass ;
The Bull not his own bellowings did expire,
But the contrivers dying voice it was :
So as th' unlook'd for element, the fire
Nourish'd and through the hollow wood did pass
Th' infus'd liquors mix'd, increas'd the flame,
And thence most sad, and mournful murmurs came.

LVIII.

Amaz'd, at this sad sight, the mother stood,
Collecting all the furies in her brest,
Like a fell *Tygres* in some *Hircan* wood,
At once, of all her young late dispossest ;
With nimble feet the hunter is pursued
Through all the sands : and in the furious quest,
Her face with threats of cruel pitty, scouls,
And high *Niphate* trembles, while she howls.

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LIX.

Streight to take up the other Child she turn'd,
 And amidst us (poor woman !) held him, where
 She saw the Pile wherein the first was burn'd,
 And fed the fire, that fill'd her with despair.
 With alike heat, at once, she rag'd, and mourn'd,
 And her mix'd grief, and fury to declare,
 To turn him all to Ashes streight (she said)
 Let him within this bosom, here, be layd.

LX.

Here as in an Immortal Furnace, here
 Love will preserve his Ashes still alive ;
 And since these murders are, to you, so dear,
 And you will me of that best part deprive,
 'Tis fit that I should cruel too appear,
 And quietly to you this other give.
 Then take him since I must depriv'd remain
 Of Both : that Dead, this other must be slain.

LXI.

As this she spoke a poignard, yet with gore
 Reeking I saw, but knew not in what hand ;
 Cruel, as stout, who the Child hid before,
 Did with an hundred wounds to death command.
 So, that the Soul for flight to chuse a door,
 Among so many, doubtful seem'd to stand ;
 Nor knew, which way it should the sally give,
 But a long space did, even in Death, survive.

LXII.

And now at length, have I (the Traiteurs said)
 My dearest Country, and unhappy Son,
 At once reveng'd, and the foundation layd
 Of future quiet, by what I have done.

You,

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You, who the cruel Tyrant's slaves are made,
You truly ought to vindicate alone
On false *Albina's* guilty blood, the ill,
And Ruins that the house of *Herod* fill.

LXIII.

'Tave kill'd my very heart, yet shall not you
Too joyful, at my misery, hence remove;
The last, whom in my bosom here I stue,
Was not my Son by nature, but by love.
And let *Albina* know, that this is true,
Inurs'd young *Alexander*: Him above
All other *Herod* lov'd, this pretty Boy,
Dead here upon the ground, was all his joy.

LXIV.

This as she spoke, our Captain with a mind
Inflam'd, resolv'd her fury to chastise;
But in an instant (how I could not find)
A sword she drew, or else did it surprize,
With which her hand a valiant act design'd,
Above her Sex; wounds him, and streight he dyes.
I scarce believ'd my self, when falling I
Saw him besmear'd with his own blood, and dy.

LXV.

At this strange chance our company with fear
Were all surpriz'd, and troubled in their mind;
And while this unexpected news they hear,
All thought that something worse remain'd behind.
But we the Nurse have taken prisoner,
And under a strict guard have now confin'd.
A single death for such a crime as this,
Too small a punishment, and torment is.

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LXVI.

All this the Tyrant with impatience hears,
And would not stay till he had made an end;
But furious as the King of Winds appears,
When with the Elements he would contend;
And 'gainst the World a dreadful War prepares,
While his fierce Troops from their deep Caves ascend.
Him to an inner Room his fury drives,
Where strait fair *Darida*, his Queen, arrives.

LXVII.

Just then, unhappy, She, the private Throne,
Of her with-drawing Room forsook; her Train
Of Damsels who upon her wait, bemoan
The loss, and sadly, full of grief, complain;
Before her, some the bloody spoils upon
Their arms then carried, of the infant slain.
And as the sighing came, with tears her eyes
Enflam'd; Where is my Bliss? my Life? She cries.

LXVIII.

As when the Goddess, who did Corn invent,
Sought her lost Daughter in *Sicilian* plains;
With flaming Pines in *Etna* steep'd she went,
And to her grief, and fury gave the reins.
Through th' air their course her rapid Dragons bent,
(While her sick mind no comfort entertains)
In a strict search of the fair straggling Maid,
Who soon as seen, was to a Rape betray'd.

LXIX.

Such, there, she came, and when her swelling eyes
Saw the loved Corps, such pitty seiz'd her heart,
And to so great an height her sorrows rise,
That her fix'd silence nothing could divert.

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All mangled at her Feet the Body lyes ;
Tear'd in the brest, the sides, and every part:
Engraild with wounds, whose strangeness all surprize,
Like *Argos* with an hundred bleeding eyes.

LXX.

How the two living Sapphyrs then were quite
Depriv'd of Lustre, and their trembling flames !
How her eyes languish'd, with a dying Light,
While in sad Accents She her grief proclames !
How her deep sighs did then the Stars invite
To pitty, while her hand her breasts inflames,
With blows, plucks off the Gold, the Roses breaks,
Of which Love had compos'd her Hair, and Cheeks !

LXXI.

At length her face to his she press'd, embrac'd,
And kiss'd him, then her self upon him threw ;
Wh' hath dress'd thee thus ? (she said) who hath defac'd
My fairest Picture, and most like Me too ?
In what dire rank are my offences plac'd,
That in such manner Heaven should Me pursue ?
Alas ! dear Child must thy kind Father lose
His Crown, and Scepter upon thee bestow.

LXXII.

Oh thou wild Beast, of all that are, most wild !
Hircanian Tigers to their Young are kind :
What fury against this, thy dearest Child
Made thee so cruel ? or what rage so blind ?
Th' hast sated now thy will, thy Soul desil'd
With all the cruelties, that fill thy mind.
Enjoy them ; may his bloud, and these my Woes,
Be thy sole Trophies, and thy Triumphs close.

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LXXIII.

Tell Me, thou spirit of Serpents ! Soul of Bears !
 Thou Heart of Adamant ! or hardest stone !
 How could 'an Infant of such tender years
 Betray thee, to whom Treason was unknown ?
 How could he, whose past Age so short appears,
 Have will to do, what you fear may be done ?

That this sad punishment, before the time,
 Should be inflicted for a future Crime.

LXXIV.

Thou art not Man, nor born of Humane kind,
 (As I believe) but rather of the rude,
 And cruel Syrts, or Seas, enrag'd by wind,
 Or of the Sphynxe's vile, and bloody brood.
 Thy Birth Chimæra, or Hell's Dogg design'd,
 With *Scylla's* and *Charibdis* rage endu'd.

And thee, among devouring Troops of curs'd,
Cyrenian Dragons, some dire Harpy nurs'd.

LXXV.

And dost thou see it (Heaven) and suffer too ?
 My Son ! and yet I live ? and thus delay,
 With mine own hand this veil of life (for you
 Alone valued by me) to take away ?

No, no, since the cold frost and palid Dew
 • Of Death, o'respreads thy cheeks so young, so gay,
 It is not fit that mine (which now can boast
 No ornament) survive, when thou art lost.

LXXVI.

And since he, who thy Being gave, with thee
 Hath It cut off, and all my hopes o'rethrown,
 In spite of Him, my soul, from fetters free,
 Shall follow thee, wherever thou art gone.

Thy

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Thy Hearse my Body shall accompany
The Fate o'th' Tree, and Fruit shall both be One.
And thus the cruel Murderer of my joyes,
With one sad slaughter many lives destroyes.

LXXVII.

Alas! how much more happy hadst thou bin,
(My dearest Infant) when with mournful cryes,
To view the light of Day thou didst begin,
If Death had then for ever clos'd thine eyes.
If when, with moan (thy language from within)
These breasts thou oft didst seek, for fresh supplies,
Instead of milk, which kindly from me flow'd,
My hand a mortal poison had bestow'd.

LXXVIII.

But this my Breast unto it self too kind,
Too foolishly injurious to thee;
When to another I a weight resign'd
So dear, and suffer'd it so nurs'd to be.
But now as bitter, as belov'd, thy mind,
It shall fulfil, and do it liberally.

I will that Debt with interest now make good,
Thy want of Milk, shall be supply'd with Bloud.

LXXIX.

At this sad language he began to melt,
His heart as hard, as hardest Alpine stone,
With pitty touch'd, seem'd to relent, and felt
A passion to his soul before unknown.
When with a Dagger hanging at a belt,
And in a golden sheath beneath her gown,
In her own brest she fix'd so deep a wound,
She streight fell pale, and dead upon the ground.

Her

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LXXX.

Her Train of Women, at this sad surprize,
Could not the fury of her hand restrain ;
Herod himself in halt, with weeping eyes,
Endeavour'd to assist her, but in vain.

He trembled; and grew pale; his faculties,
Grief, wonder, and amazement all enchain.

He seem'd a Statue, stiff, and pallid grown ;
As late his heart, so now his limbs are stone.

LXXXI.

Thou foolish, barbarous Prince ! What canst thou say ?
See, see how vain all humane Counsels are !

Wherein thou thought'st thy only safety lay,
Thou now dost find thy mortal danger there ;
Thy Son, and Kingdom both thou didst betray,
While to secure them, thou didst thus prepare.

Thy sentence on thee falls, and thou alone
Hast punish'd thine own fault, before 'twas done.

LXXXII.

As when a Limb cut off, by some surprize,
Or by the sword receives to th' quick a wound ;
The bloud freight backward as affrighted flies,
And for a while no signs of bleeding found.
But soon as pain o'th hurt the sense supplies,
Streight warm Vermilion streams o'rflow the ground.
And from the open'd veins, the bloud its course
Maintains, like waters from their native source.

LXXXIII.

So, sudden grief the cruel Tyrants tongue
A while restrain'd, and all his sense delay'd,
Till through excess of anguish, in a throug,
His sighs broke out, and for words passage made.

Tears

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Tears from his eyes, in rivulets streight sprung,
Like blood from's Soul, and inward Wounds betray'd.
At length he fell, where's wife, and son then lay,
Like Rocks of Marble, in a Crimson Sea.

LXXXIV.

See! to what dismal sight, these weeping eyes
Heaven hath reserv'd? Will ye ne'r close again?
Or that my griefs may give these warm supplies,
Must ye be forc'd still open to remain?

O *Alexander*! dost not hear my cries?
Flour of my Soul, cut off ith Bud, and slain!
O *Doris*! dost not hear? Giv'st no reply?
But hid'st the Sun of thy fair eyes? Oh why?

LXXXV.

Wretch that I am! Which shall I first lament?
My Son? Or Thee? dear consort of my Bed;
Who in the prime of years from me art rent:
And He (alafs!) no sooner born, but dead.
On you these tears shall for my self be spent,
Your Fate I'll weep, as ruins on my head.

My Crown shall now no other purple wear,
Then what the Tincture of your blood shall bear.

LXXXVI.

Poor Child! Of a most cruel Father born!
Under the influence of a Star severe;
Are these the Ensignes should thy brows adorn?
Is this the Throne, I have prepar'd thee here?
Oh with what tragique pomp the Fates here mourn!
My Nuptial Bed, is turn'd into a Bier.

Those Lights, which I to *Hymen* did commend,
Must now (alafs!) sad exequies attend.

Oh

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LXXXVII.

Oh my distracted Soul! What was design'd
By my Fate, or thy folly? to what end
This mad advice, which made my reason blind?
So, that I could not even mine own defend;
Nor when th' edict went out, could call to mind,
To draw him from the danger did impend.

But this (rebellious flames) was your design,
(Perfidious Stars !) your cruelty, not mine.

LXXXVIII.

But you (infernal Furies !) spurr'd me on,
To act all this, though guilty I remain
Of all these ills, of all this mischief done,
'Twas I contriv'd it all, I these have slain
My Life from Life, and honour from my Throne
I have cut off, and that which should sustain
With Me, and after Me my Race, and Crown,
I onely have o'rethrown, and trampled down.

LXXXIX.

Now what revenge (thou most unhappy child,
Of an unhappy Mother) can suffice
For expiation of a rage, so wild?
What can'st thou from thy Sire accurs'd reprove?
Not thy perfidious Nurse with blood defil'd,
Nor Troops, the Actors of my cruelties :
Nor if, at once, my kingdom to thy Shade,
And I, my self, a sacrifice be made.

XC.

The name of King, and Father I le assume
No more, such titles too injurious were;
Vile Monster, Devil will me best become,
Unworthy thee, whom I have murder'd here.

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How much (since now too late I find my doom)
Do I, to those dead Infants, envy bear:

For since my Joyes no longer now survive,
'Tis fit that I this day should cease to Live.

XCI.

Yet could I wish, those naked Souls which I
Spoil'd of their bodies, were now cloth'd again,
That spoiling them anew, their limbs might ly
Expos'd to salvage beasts, winds, frost, and rain:
And should kind Heaven collect them, as they dy,
That they may hidden from its sight remain;

Yet will I satisfy my grief, though Fame
Shall Me, most cruel through the World proclaim.

XCII.

Oh, who will give me here that sword, which all
My Joyes cut off? for it is fit that I,
By the same weapon with my son should fall ;
And since that Branch is broke, the stock must dy.
Thus his complaints around the Country call,
To moan the Ruins of his Family.

While the most happy Spirits, already fled,
There wings, to'ards the *Elysian* Mansions, spread.

XCIII.

As at the entrance of some shady grove,
In the declining of a Summer's day,
In Troops the flying, little creatures move,
And in the trembling Light still waving play ;
And to the Swains, and Shepherds seem, above,
Atoms inspir'd with life, by every ray.

So, that the false, and still removing light,
Deceives the Children, who pursue their flight.

Or,

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XCIV.

Or as the busie, and industrious Bees
In *Hybla's* fresh, and odorif'rous air,
The spoils of *April*, from the rosie Trees,
And fragrant Lilies gather every where;
Whence (cunning Architects in all degrees)
Their well-built Cells for Winter they prepare,
Ingenious Fabricks ! with most stately rooms,
Of Virgin Wax, form'd in odorous Combs.

XCV.

So full of Joy, and from their Bodies free ;
Those happy souls towards Heav'n take their flight
And visibly to some appear'd to be
Wrap'd up within a glorious cloud of Light,
A joyful Troop, a beautilous company
All crown'd with flaming Diadems most bright ;
And, in a Circle, which they largely spread,
They starry Garlands weave, and Dances lead.

XCVI.

The Sky was most serene, all clouds gave way,
And brightest Stars upon their triumphs wait.
The South, and Northern Winds their rage allay,
And calm to see their pleasant Dances fate ;
The air, and gentle Breezes sport, and play,
And early birds with Songs congratulate.

Of Crimson dew the Morn did then prepare
Gems for her breasts, and Roses for her hair.

XCVII.

The vast Abysses, and death's Prison, where
The shades of ancient Heroes dwell, then smil'd,
While those so bright, and glorious Lamps appear,
And the dark, Iron gates with lustre guild.

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The Royal Poet, and stout Shepherd there
Was seen, who, when a Boy the Gyant kill'd ;
His Sling, his Harp, and Scepter on the Shore,
Of *Lethe* lay, not us'd as heretofore.

XCVIII.

But then the dusky fields (that border near)
Where mournful birds on barren boughs reside,
And never silent are, impoverish'd were
While with fresh flow'rs to braid his hair he try'd ;
When a new light struck, through the gloomy air,
His eyes, and he their shining Ensignes spy'd ;
His Harp resum'd he from his sacred breast
Inspir'd with holy Fire this Song exprest.

XCIX.

Glad tidings ! see, those Messengers of Joy,
Which unto us were promis'd long ago ;
Behold those pure forerunners of the Day,
Who with Vermilion rays approach us so.
Now whatsoe're, of old, did us annoy,
Shall cease, and we full liberty shall know.

The Sun is up, which guilds our dark shades o're,
Let's kneel, and all, at once, his Rise adore.

C.

To you, most long'd-for Angels ! to you Peace,
And Glory ! who have that salvation gain'd ,
Which we long, long have hop'd : But who are these,
Who are with wounds and blood so strangely stain'd ?
Who cut those throats ? Whence did that Rage encrease,
That on their Heads so cruel mischief rain'd ?

What heart 'gainst pity could so harden'd be ?

What hand, what Sword so fir'd with cruelty ?

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CI.

And you, that in your selves, your selves retain,
(Destructive storms !) what then did you repress ?
What bridled you (ye winds ?) What did restrain
(Thunder, and clouds !) Your rage from its excess ?
So, that this act unpunish'd did remain,
And God's most just revenge seem'd to be less.
An Act, that 'midst eternal Hate, and Ire
Furies amaz'd, and made Hell blush like fire.

CII.

O sacred ! holy ! O most bless'd, and dear
Triumphant Martyrs ! whom nought could subdue ;
Heroes ! who by your Captain chosen were
To die for him, before he dies for you .
Imbitter'd Apples, pull'd by hands severe !
Flow'rs, that, unblown, in his own garden grew :
Sweet Roses ! dy'd in your own blood, and born
To be cut off with wounds in groves of thorn.

CIII.

Most tender Lillies ! untouch'd Jessamine !
Wherein sweet'st streams of purple Nectar flow :
Preserv'd in Gods own Garden , made divine
T' enrich those Feasts he does in Heav'n bestow.
Fair branches ! that on earth did glorious shine,
Torn from the trunks whereon you once did grow !
Small, broken stones ! on which the Church will lay
Its new Foundation, and its Honours pay.

CIV.

To us here languishing, our Saviours name
Upon your Virgin Foreheads writ, you bear.
Sweet sheep ! whose looks your Innocence proclaim ;
Immaculate, and whitest Doves you are.

Purg'd

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Purg'd Holocausts, bright Offerings, free from blame !
Wash'd in the Lamb's, and your own blood most fair ;
First Victims, that to th' King of Saints were pay'd,
And by the cruel sword were open layd.

CV.

Welcome Illustrious Sp'rits ; souls clear, and fair !
Most happy Babes ! who, to us certain news
Of our approaching Jubilee now bear,
And long-expected Joys through all diffuse.
O sacred Drops ! and every drop a Star !
Blood, which than Rubies Christ doth rather chuse,
As richest Gems selected for his own,
T' enrich his ~~Dia~~dem, and his Spouses Crown.

CVI.

O happy wounds ! and signs that now declare
Past Martyrdom, with great'st Veracity ;
Of Glory and Honour surest Pledges are,
That Grace and Love can loudest magnifie.
Now who is he, who will not tears prepare
To bath you, and with kisses wipe you dry ?
Or who is he whom pity will not move
To drink those streams are shed for wounded Love ?

CVII.

With sprinklings of your blood, even Heaven desires,
It self t' adorn, instead of its own Light,
The moon in such fine Purple now aspires
To paint her Face, and mix it with her white,
In such pure rivolets, Angels, and those Fires
That shine above, to view themselves delight ;
The Sun's ambitious, in so fair a Sea,
Himself t' impurple, and to drown the Day.

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CVIII.

O most delightful, O most charming tears!
O dearest Sighs, and Groans that pleasures move!
From sound of which, the most harmonious Spheares
Make their high Confort as they turn above!
O sweetest Grief, which the lov'd Martyr bears
With all delight, and makes his Joys improve!

O pleasing Death, that does more glorious seem
Than Life it self, in honour and esteem.

CIX.

Lov'd Spirits! beautilous Souls, how great, how fair
Immortal Arches now doth God for you

Ith' *Empyrean* Capitol prepare,
With Palms, and Crowns, and Bliss'es that ensue?

What greater glory, then, when Hell a War
Designs, their King, and Armies to subdue;

With naked Champions, who so took the field
Unarm'd, and thus were made your Saviour's shield.

CX.

In that high starry Court, where now he reigns
In triumph, and from whence he sent you, there
With Angels, your Companions, the Remains
And spoils of his great Victory you shall share.

The Standard, there, of Death, with bloody stains,
And that of Innocence all white appear;

There, for a Trophy, 'mids those Troops displai'd,
Large Banners, your torn Swathbands shall be made.

CXI.

Even in your torments O most happy you!
Who rather more of milk than blood did spend;
In your first day, your last night did ensue;
One day gave your Beginning, and your End.

Yet

The Slaughter of the Innocents.

131

Yet was it fit, before you either knew,
That you with Death and Sorrow should contend;
And with torn Sails your weak Barks first effort
Scarce made into the Sea, should gain your Port.

CXII.

We infirm Wrestlers: we (you now may say)
Faln in the Lifts up to God's bosome rise :
From bloudy Paths we now the Milky way,
(New Stars) with purer white shall signalize.
Our Feet, which, now no weakness can betray,
Tread on the highest Spheres, and Earth despise,
We from a loose, and little Veil begun
To survey Heav'n, before we saw the Sun.

CXIII.

As thus he sung, those glorious souls his Lays
Abruptly stop'd, the shades straight vanish quite,
To Heav'n their hands the Ancient Fathers raise,
Hoping a Period of so long a Night.
And through the horrors, of those gloomy ways,
The welcom Children (now a Burthen Light)
Bear in their Arms, and iterate upon
Their holy cheeks their kisses, and their moan.

Notes

Notes upon the Fourth Book.

Stanza LXXXIV.

Herod had married this Doris, of his own Country, and whom he begat this Alexander; whose death among these Innocents, when reported to Augustus: I had rather (said he) be Herod's Swine, than his Son, because as a Jew he would let the Swine live, but jealous of his Son, would murder him.



FINIS.

Errata,

Page 36. Stanza 47. for *stocks* read *shocks*. pag. 55.
Stanza 112. for *spife*, r. *Spyes*.

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